

Adventure Probe

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Now in its SIXTH Volume

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Adventure Probe is distributed during the first week of the month. COPY DATE for contributions and ads. is 14th of the previous month.

CONTRIBUTIONS

All contributors sending in material between 14th of the previous month and up to copy date will have their names entered in the Hall of Fame for the subsequent month. CONTRIBUTIONS are always free and ALL readers are invited to send in items for every section. Anything from a single hint or tip to a full blown article are all very welcome. Reviews of the adventures you have played are especially welcome. Please check first to see if a review has already appeared. Don't worry if you can't send in typed material as handwritten is just as welcome. If you send in contributions for more than one section please use different sheets and make sure you include your name and contributor. If you do send in items ready typed then please use A4 with a 12pt font margin all round with text being approx 70 chars across and 60 lines per page. Items can be sent in on disc (all discs will be returned). The Editor is able to print out from Amstrad CPC6128 (Protext), Amiga (Protext) or Atari ST (First Word). Sorry no printer for the ST. FAXIMILE may be used to send items also (same telephone number). If you send in items for the IN-TOUCH section please clearly mark where they are adventures, utilities, arcade etc.

POSTAL ADDRESS

Please send all correspondence, subscriptions etc to: THE EDITOR, MR RODRIGUES, ADVENTURE PROBE, 67 LLOYD STREET, LLANDUDNO, GWYNEDD, LL28 2YP. If writing from overseas please add UNITED KINGDOM.

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HALL OF FAME

Sincere thanks to the following readers who kindly took the time and trouble to send in contributions during the past month. I don't know what I would do without you all!

RON RAINBIRD, PAUL RIGBY, FLOYO, ANASTASIA, PAT BRADLEY, SUE ROSEBLADE, JENNY PERRY, KEN CHAMBERS, JACK LOCKERBY, GARETH PITCHFORD, PHILIP REYNOLDS, GEORGE KERSEY, SIMON AVERY, NEIL SHIPMAN, BEN WHITFORD, ALAN REDPATH, DOROTHY MILLARD, MATT NEWSOME, KEZ GRAY, STEVE MCLAREN, FRANK FRIDO, DENNIS DOWDALL.

Special thanks to MerC for the cover logo.

CONTRIBUTIONS will be most gratefully received for the next issue. Everyone is cordially invited to send in something for all sections and especially reviews and getting you started. Items for both 8 and 16 bit are needed so if you have anything then please send them in soon. Thanks..... Handy.

EDITORIAL

Welcome to volume 6 issue 5 of Adventure Probe.

This issue marks the fourth year that you have all been putting up with me. It really doesn't seem that long since I took over from Sandra. I look back at the May 1988 issue and groan - no true descendents on my printer, only a handful of reviews and only 40 pages in all. Here we are four years later, two photocopiers later and numerous printers too! I really have to thank you all for your fantastic support, your infinite patience with my catastrophic blunders and most important of all to me, your friendship! Not only that but the next issue will be Adventure Probe's SIXTH birthday issue! That makes Probe the longest running monthly independent adventure magazine of all and it is thanks to all of you that I can say that. You all deserve my thanks and a pat on the back because Probe is YOUR magazine and it is YOU who have kept it going. I look forward to many more years editing Probe, if you will put up with me!

I would appreciate your help in making the June, birthday issue, special to celebrate so if you have something that you would like to send in to mark the occasion then please do so. As usual, contributions are needed for all sections and for all computers so please do your best.

Llandudno turns Victorian again for the May bank holiday but this year I am going to go and see it properly. Yes, folks, I finally managed to get someone else to take my place with the organisation of that event so I don't have to wander around the town dressed like a walking black mushroom! Grue and family are coming over again to visit although I refuse to ride with him at 100 mph down the toboggan run at the ski slope! (He won't come unless he can ride on that but I reckon it is because someone places a bottle or two of Newcastle Brown Ale at strategic points along the ride). So, weather permitting, we should all have a great time.

We have had an addition to the computer family! Incentive Software have kindly sent me an Amstrad PC 1640, this was most kind of them and I really appreciate it - thanks Ian. This means that I can get much better organised with databases, spreadsheets, wordprocessors and DTP in the future. Only problem is that I really don't know where to start and which would be the most useful programs for me. I would also like to see some adventures on the PC too so if any of you have any advice on which programs I should look out for then I would really appreciate hearing from you. I must say that the PC looks a rather formidable beast. I am in rather a state with it at present - you all know the situation of being confronted with a new computer and not knowing which keys to press for what function. I live in fear of wiping the hard disk by mistake so if anyone knows of a way to protect the essential programs that are on it then I would appreciate the advice. It seems that nearly everything has to be installed on the HD before they can be run properly so I fear that there is no way I can chicken out and ignore it! As soon as this issue is posted I will really get the chance to delve into the workings of DOS etc. I break out in a cold sweat everytime I switch it on at the moment and am having, yet again, to learn a whole new language - isn't computing fun?! Oh heck! I've gobbed up the page again! Hope you enjoy this issue and I'll see you all again next month as usual - byeee,

Mandy

REVIEWS

HOTEL HELL

By Mario Moeller. Price £4 for the disc version from THE GUILD, 760 Tuburn Road, Erdington, Birmingham, B24 9NX. Cheques etc payable to Glenda Collins. Overseas orders please add £1 for extra postage costs.

Reviewed by *Dorothy Millard* on Commodore 64

Can you imagine a corpse in a bath of acid? Well that's what you'll find playing Hotel Hell. At the start you are placed in the guest lounge which is deserted and your objective is simply to escape from the terrors of Hotel Hell, although this isn't as easy as it first appears.

The location descriptions and digitized graphics are all loaded from disk when you enter each location which causes a few delays. However, on subsequent visits a brief description is given unless you type *look*. This has the effect of speeding up movement through locations which you have already visited. The way the program handles get and drop is unusual in that all you have to do is to type either *GET* or *DROP* and the program presents you with a list of objects from which to choose. The unusual puzzles will have you thinking hard and the atmosphere of horror is quite good, especially in the elevator with the massive green monster on top. Beware when you enter the freezer as the way out is anything but simple and the riddle of the Hedge Sculptures will have you guessing.

Some locations in the game have timed situations so make sure you pause the game while you think about what to do next. My only reservation with Hotel Hell is with the digitized graphics which take a long time to load in, but these can always be turned off if you wish and once you have visited a location they are not repeated. On the whole a very enjoyable game with some interesting puzzles to keep everyone happy.

YARKON BLUES II

By Jason Davis and available from Wow Software, 78 Radipole Lane, Weymouth, Dorset, DT4 9RS. Price £3 tape and £5 disc and available for Amstrad CPC's.

Reviewed by *Simon Avery*

This is the third adventure released by Wow from Jason, and before I review the game I will have to say that I am most definitely a fan already. So it was with a certain amount of anticipation that I received this game which follows SMIRKING HORROR, a spoof version of LURKING HORROR, and, of course, YARKON BLUES I. The story follows on from Yarkon one where your hero, Rik McQuick has escaped the planet Yarkon and sets the co-ordinates for the nearest space station. Having done this, Rik falls asleep at the controls and awakes after he has crashed his spaceship into the docking bay of said station.....

A quick scout around at the beginning tells you that all is most definitely not well, the space station is deserted with the only exception of a large blubber monster and a suicidal lemming. There are time limits on both parts of the game, but not so tight that you don't have time to play around a little first.. It is not too difficult and a definite buy for fans of sci-fi scenarios and especially fans of

TV's Red Dwarf which shares the same sort of humour. The first part is quite short in locations but this is because of the sometimes verbose descriptions of the rooms which take up a fair chunk of memory. The lemming is a star in his own right in this game, he pops up in some of the most unlikely places once you have freed him. The messages in this adventure, especially those concerning the lemming are just hilarious - superb.

Part two is also set in the space station, and the objective is simply to escape. Not so easy as the Transporter is broken. Cabbages, Firebugs, Man-eating eggs as well as the lemming all make their appearance throughout the game. The lemming saves you from being burnt alive when you start a fire with the Firebug and also appears as a pair of furry feet protruding from a rubbish bin. Hmm, ticklish problem that, once which could provide some stimulation. All in all, a wonderful game, written on GAC and playtested by the ubiquitous Lorna Paterson which is a recommendation in itself and, as you'd expect, bug free throughout. When's the next one Jason?

=====

RETURN OF THE JOYSTICK

One of the GI Games re-releases. Available from the distributors, Zenobi Software, 26 Spotland Tops, Cutgate, Rochdale, Lancs. Price £1.99 on tape for Spectrum.

Reviewed by *Steve Clay*

This is one of the many Delta 4 games currently available from GI/Zenobi. It is a text and graphic single part adventure written using Quill and Illustrator. The aim of the game appears (no instructions supplied) to be to play enough games to obtain the joystick of the title. In theory this is a good game idea - having numerous games that can be loaded into an in-game computer and played to reveal items or secrets to be used in other sections. Unfortunately Delta 4 produced a game so poor in all areas I think it is one of the worst games I've ever had the misfortune to play.

You begin your quest at a bus shelter where you will find a radio and a sword. The radio when listened to plays a random selection of tunes! (That was the high point folks!). Should you decide to linger in these early locations, for whatever reason, you will be eaten by a man-eating tiger! The game admits this unannounced attack is unfair but it doesn't make you feel any better. Having wandered blindly around for what seemed like eternity, I sent for a help sheet to try and make sense of the game. It didn't work! All I realised was that there is very little to do in the game except LOAD and QUIT from the numerous games that can be found in the Delta 4 offices. The graphics that appear in the game are of the worst kind. Slowly drawn and full-screen. This wouldn't be a problem if they were decent but they are typically blocky, bland and above all a waste of memory. The text isn't likely to win any prizes either.

Looking back over the notes I made while playing Return of the Joystick, I could find no good points! Everything I have noted is in the minus column. Having played the game I got the feeling that the whole thing had been written in an afternoon in an attempt to cash in on Delta 4's popularity at the time. This game is very, very poor. If you were planning to buy this, do yourself a favour and order one of GI's other games instead as it just HAS to be better than this!

=====

DEEP SPACE DRIFTER

Michael J. Roberts and Steve McAdams / High Energy Software
(TADS Text adventure on ST (1 Meg required) and PC)
Available from the more discerning PD libraries!

Reviewed (ST version) by Neil Shipman

"It was a more exciting time, back in the early years of deep space exploration. Anyone who could afford a good ship and a tank full of fuel could strike out into the vast empty reaches to find his fortune among the stars.

Of course, you'd have a better chance of finding your fortune if you had remembered to check a nav chart before heading off into the void. Now you're nearly out of fuel and air, you're tired and hungry -- and desperately hoping you can find, someone monitoring the distress channels."

This is the start of Deep Space Drifter, the second game written with the Text Adventure Development System (TADS), an excellent utility with which writers can create Infocom look-alike and play-alike adventures.

Your immediate predicament is obvious but a way out is to hand in the form of a button marked 'Distress' on the console in front of you. Fortunately, your signal is picked up by a young woman on an orbiting space station, so you set the 'AutoNav' and hope that your ship has enough fuel to get you there.

You just manage to dock your craft but there is little time to wonder about the absence of a reception because hunger and tiredness are taking their toll. Grabbing a bite to eat from the fridge you find a bedroom and settle down for a nap, only to enter a very strange dream sequence involving huge plants and weird creatures. But a dream is all it is and you wake refreshed.

Exploration of the station's dozen rooms turns up some useful items including a couple of tapes which can be played in the log reader. As you listen to them you sense the increasing paranoia of the station's crew, Sigourney and Pinback, (the writers are obviously fans of John Carpenter's cult spoof sci-fi movie 'Dark Star') which has culminated in Pinback's attempts to get the old laser cannon on the planet working. From the feel of the explosions which regularly rock the structure it looks as if he has been successful.

The only way of getting down to the surface is on the remaining TripMaster 2000 (tm) tram which is currently out of order. Its repair involves a well thought out series of interlinked puzzles which you will just manage to solve in time to escape before the space station is destroyed.

Arriving on the planet you get a glimpse of Pinback (who is quite definitely suffering from delusions of grandeur) as he wanders off to pursue his crazy plans and leaves you to explore the old military base. Different sectors of the complex, including the laser and the reactor which powers it, are accessed by means of a shuttle car. This operates well on autopilot but you need to find a way of controlling it yourself. To do so you must get past a security DroidMaster robot and run the gauntlet of a formidable array of weapons which protect the Commander's quarters from unauthorised entry.

While you are figuring out how to do this you can ponder on the contents of the xeno-biology book you find in the barracks. The section on the habits of the brown spiny-beaked pin-headed swamp weasel, a terrifying man-eating predator, and its only natural enemy the sabertoothed triple-ringed xeno-beaver proves to be rather interesting and the mention of such creatures brings to mind your earlier dream.

It so happens that there is a beaver preventing you from getting into a spaceship on another landing pad and not very far away is a swamp. Now if you could just get a weasel out of its habitat and distract that beaver you'd really be getting somewhere. The swamp is an easily mappable 7x7 grid with a plant at each location:

In the swamp

You're in a large, foul swamp. It looks like you might be able to travel to the north, east, and northeast.

In front of you is a large and strange plant. It stands about six feet high, and has a red spot and a blue spot near its base. The top of the plant opens into huge jaws that could easily hold a human. The plant is holding a balloon in its jaws.

>touch red spot

The plant ejects the balloon, sending it high into the air to the northeast. Even as the balloon whistles through the air, you hear a terrified yelp from the northeast, followed by a loud "fwoop".

Solving this problem - which, for me, was one of the highlights of the adventure - could take you so long that sleep gets the better of you once again. Another short dream will then give you an insight into a sequence of events you will encounter later on.

An enormous complex of caves found underneath the base's reactor presents you with a similarly well-designed puzzle to that posed by the swamp. All available directions are shown and this is not a maze, but making any progress is severely hampered by the fact that the caves regularly flood and there are only a few places where you can escape the torrent of water.

Before the story is over you will meet the crazy Pinback a couple more times. Can you put paid to his megalomaniacal plans? Is escape from the planet possible? And what has happened to Sigourney whose answer to your original distress call saved you from certain death in the first place? Only time and, of course, your adventuring experience and ability will tell.

Deep Space Drifter is a science fiction tale which should appeal to all adventure fans who enjoy a real challenge and appreciate well written text and cleverly constructed, original puzzles spiced with just the right touch of humour. To have produced such a work as well as the TADS utility with which it was implemented is worthy of the highest praise.

With a bit of fine tuning and, of course, some lavish product packaging, Deep Space Drifter could very nearly pass for an Infocom title of the mid '80s, something like a Planetfall/Starcross hybrid. Need I say more?

THE LAST SNOWMAN

By Margaret and Mike Crewdson. Available from WoW Software, 78 Radipole Lane, Weymouth, Dorset, DT4 9RS. On Amstrad CPC cassette for £2 and on disc for £4. Cheques etc payable to J G Pancott.

Reviewed by *Jay Honosutomo*

Waking up one lovely spring morning with the birds singing, the sun shining, a picture of such beauty that the Louvre itself would have been proud to display. As you gaze out of your bedroom window, something odd strikes you quite suddenly. You turn your head once again and sure enough, there it is. It is the snowman that you made during the winter! Why hasn't it gone? Surely it should have melted by now?

You rush down into the garden to take a closer inspection. To your complete surprise the snowman begins to talk! He casually mentions that due to an argument between himself and Jack Frost, Jack has refused to send him along with all the other snowmen to their special resting place. So now it looks as if he will have to stay there for all time! That is, unless you can help.

You must hunt and find seven pieces of paper which, when pieced together will tell you the place where the snowman must go. In between this task, you must also go around helping other people too.

This new game from WoW Software is one of two adventures which have been specially aimed at children aged 9 upwards. These types of adventures need to take on a whole new formula in order to work. For instance, they need to be logical, straightforward and maybe have a touch of incentive. How did this game rate up?

Actually I rather enjoyed this little jaunt. The puzzles are very open and should not oppress you too much. Maybe this review is unfair, as I am not quite 9 years old myself (though I'm still a child at heart!). So, I've let someone who is nearer this age level tackle the game and he'll conclude the review for me. He is my brother, Paul, who's 11 at the moment. He hasn't really paid attention to adventures, mainly having trouble with the parser. He should have a different opinion on this one though.

"Well I liked the storyline and the lay-out of the game. The pictures used are also very good. The puzzles are not too hard and you'll know what to do on each one. But there are a couple of little traps you can fall into if you forget or don't do something. Sometimes I was slightly frustrated because I fell for one and had to start again.

I noticed that Snowman uses different direction commands to other adventures I've seen. It uses left, right, forward and back instead of the compass points. I thought this was a good idea and will help other people who want to start to play adventures to get along just fine.

Overall, this is a great game. It makes a change from the arcade and role-playing games that I often play. I'm looking forward to playing other adventures now. Maybe I'll even try to write one (ha, ha, ha - Jay.). Who knows?"

SEARCH FOR THE KING

By Accolade and available for PC and Amiga computers. Shop around for the best price.

Reviewed by *Roif Weis*

You are Les Manley, a bit of a weedy video technician at WILT TV. Nothing ever happens to Les out of the ordinary so when he hears of a contest with a million dollar prize, called Search for the King, he jumps in with both feet! The King in question that you have to search for seems to be none other than our Elvis himself.

The quality of the graphics and sound are vastly superior to many games I have played recently you even see reflections of Les as he passes by at various times during play which is something I have never seen before. The graphics are especially good when you view the animated introduction to the adventure itself. This is rather long so if you decide to re-boot you can always press the ESC key to skip the sequence the second time around. The music, which can be turned off if you don't want any, is very atmospheric indeed. This is a big game and comes on five Amiga discs so I was grateful to be able to install it on my hard disk which saves a lot of disc swapping and the installation program provided is very quick and easy to use. There is quite a comprehensive, if basic, manual and also a clue book in case you get stuck.

There are plenty of problems to solve and lots of locations to explore. The puzzles range from the easy-peasy to the downright illogical so the clue book came in rather handy. I did think that the game was completed rather too quickly. I did have to keep starting again and again as I noticed that some items that were essential to completing the game were not to be found. Well they were but they were invisible. That was one of my gripes with this game and I thought it a rather unfair. Overall I have to admit that I enjoyed the experience. Moving Les around was very nicely implemented and smooth compared to other Accolade games I have played in the past. A light-hearted animated adventure that I would recommend to keep you busy for a few days.

NOT ANOTHER BIG DISK

For Spectrum +3. Available from Zenobi Software, 26 Spotland Tops, Cutgate, Rochdale, Lancs, OL12 7NX priced at £4.99.

Reviewed by *Gareth Pitchford*

Not another big disk? But indeed it is! The Big Disks are certainly a clever marketing ploy - it is lucky for old J.W. that they also represent excellent value for money. So what will you get if you send your dosh off to the Balrog's coffers? Well, the usual four games of course! They are:

THE FISHER KING by Dennis Francombe.

It is a time of the great festival of Pentacost and the good King Arthur has summoned the various Lords and Knights of the realm to dine with him at Caerleon. In the midst of the great feast the "Loathly Damsel" appeared and asked for a Knight to assist her in her quest. As you can guess, nobody jumped at the chance to help her out! You have taken on the role of Perceval, a lowly scullion who has always wanted to be a Knight. Your first decision is whether you wish to volunteer for the task. You have to do it anyway whatever you decide and so off you go. The first thing that "bugged" me was the prompt that you had to answer "Yea" or "Nay" to (Yes or No aren't accepted!).

Then the opening graphic appeared. I still wonder what it is supposed to portray. Then I was asked whether I wished to volunteer. The correct answer appears to be NAY - but I can see no logical reason why this brings about the event that happens later and yet YEA doesn't! Other little things spoiled my enjoyment of the game. Some of the location descriptions don't update themselves. At one point I was blocked by a knight and was quite rightly told in the text that I couldn't go any way at present. However, when the knight is dead the same message appears despite the fact that two exits are now available. There is nothing major wrong with this game and it undoubtedly has its good points - unfortunately, I wasn't encouraged to look for them.

'TWAS A TIME OF DREAD by Clive Wilson.

This is the concluding part of the Darkest Road trilogy and shouldn't disappoint any of Clive's fans. It's many a long year (three thousand if you really want to be pedantic), since the mysterious stranger last set foot in the land, but now he returns. He visits you, for you are a descendant of the "Singer of the Song", and tells you tales of the "Black Wanderer" and his evil creation the "Unborn One". He tells you that the wanderer created another being, a being that has mutated over the years into many. The being called its number the "Legion". Only you and the power of the "Silent Song" can combat this evil menace and banish it from the land. The game is full of the usual Clive Wilson high standard problems. They're wide ranging in difficulty, which gives the game an excellent learning curve. The text is nicely done and the responses are a lot better than in Clive's earlier games. However, I felt that the humour that occasionally creeps in was slightly out of place and in danger of spoiling the carefully built atmosphere. Definitely one to while away a couple of nights!

ARNOLD II by Scott Denyer.

What, a Delbert the Hamster game?! Here the compilation takes a turn for the worst! - Joking aside, here's my biased opinion of this title. "The Pratt with the Cape is Back!", or at least that's what the title screen says and it is right as old Arnold the adventurer bounces back into our Speccy's. But why? Is it that Scott Denyer needs the royalty money? Or is it something far more serious? It turns out to be the latter, for an evil atmosphere has again pervaded the land - the evil Schwartz has returned and only one man can stop him. Unfortunately "Robocop" is under copyright to someone else so the people call upon Arnold's help once again. The game is written in the same "laid back" style of the original. In fact it's a good idea if you play that first as then you'll enjoy the amusing references to the first game and have fun as you catch up with all your friends. The usual Delbert screen modes and strong puzzles are present in this humorous title from the warped mind of Scott Denyer. I look forward to an Arnold III with the hope that programming such a game will keep Scott quiet for a week or two!

TREASURE ISLAND by Jack Lockerby.

A little gem from Jack Lockerby! So how should I review it? Should I merely copy from one of its rave reviews? I suppose I could always say that you play young Jim Hawkins, in this excellent adaptation of the book, and must find some treasure on an... erm... island. But would that give you an idea of what a fun little game this two parter is? I could mention the brilliant problems and all the nice little touches that really make the game. Alternatively I could just shut up and end by quoting from June Rowe's Probe review, "All in all, I found this a most enjoyable game", she said. And you can't argue with that can you?

OVERALL: Another excellent bargain. Buy it this instant!

THE ADVENTURE GAMER'S MANUAL

Author Bob Redrup. Published by Sigma Press, 1 South Oak Lane, Wimslow, Cheshire, SK9 6AR. Price £12.99.

Reviewed by *Ken Chambers*

As a fairly new adventurer I thought buying a book on the subject might be a good idea. As this book is a recent release I chose this particular one.

So to the book. Described as help for beginners and experts alike the entire book is split into various sections covering all aspects of adventure games. From the beginnings through to game recommendations. Included is a useful getting started section based on actual games, a very good mapping technique section and a section on puzzles. These are only three of the subjects covered.

On the whole the book is well set out, and well written by a gentleman who obviously has a great love of adventure games whether they be text only or graphic adventures. In my opinion even experts could find some help in this book. Well worth the money even though some of the games mentioned are becoming increasingly more difficult to find.

THE BIG SLEAZE

Re-release by GI Games and available from the distributor Zenobi Software, 26 Spotland Tops, Cutgate, Rochdale, Lancs, OL12 7NX priced at £1.99 - for Spectrum.

Reviewed by *Neil Ashmore*

The Big Sleaze gives you the chance to take the role of a private eye, similar to the Mike Hemmer character from the TV series. You are Sam Spillede, and start the game in your very untidy office. Soon you are visited by a beautiful woman who asks you to find her father who has disappeared. Then a dog wanders in carrying a coded note from a Miss J Doe. Take time to search your office and the first few locations thoroughly, as many of the objects you need are to be found here.

The text is well written and atmospheric, often with wonderful touches of Fergus McNeill's humour. The few (half-screen) graphics there are, are reasonable in quality, and happily don't appear every time you enter a location. Vocabulary is mainly verb/noun but occasionally longer sentences are needed. All the usual verbs are used including a HELP command which may or may not be of assistance. Additional words of a certain four lettered variety result in some very amusing messages (e.g. try to KISS VELMN).

Once you get to your car (part one), one of the main puzzles is deciding which order to visit the various destinations, as some of these require the loading of parts two and three. To avoid an early demise in part one, don't forget to EXAMINE just about everything. Overall, it is an excellent adventure and should keep most people (especially new adventurers), occupied for many bleary eyes, coffee swilling nights to come. At £1.99 you can't go wrong with this one.

THE BOYS (AND GIRL!) ARE BACK IN TOWN (Part 3)

by Paul Rigby

This month continues the Infocom re-union with the introduction of the informal part of the conference (see Part 1 for details). We join the chaps with Wizzy, the host, about to introduce the first questioner, Roe Adams (co-designer of the RPG, Wizardry IV, incidentally).

(Wizzy/Host) Okay, we'll start with Roe (since he's dialling in from Japan), then we'll go with the rest in order....
(Urfang/Roe R. Adams) Remember the "Where the sun doesn't shine" ad? Also, didn't I see a huge GUE Poster in your office years ago? GA

(Wizzy/Host) Comments, InfoAuthors?

(Mike Berlyn) <Interpreters for Roe, sign up to the left...>

(Bob Bates) Yes, I remember the sun don't shine ad. And I do seem to remember seeing a big hand-drawn map of GUE hanging in the Imps' lounge. Whatever happened to it? <standing out of way of stampede of collectors>. GA

(Meretzky) Back in the really really early days of Infocom (1980, I think) Infocom commissioned a Zork I poster, which was done by Dave Ardito an artist friend of Stu's. It was essentially a cutaway view of the GUE geography in Zork I. The original was framed and hung in the central area of the implementor's suite. That might be what Roe saw. Stu, don't you have the original now? GA.

(Stu Galley) Yes, I have them sealed in a helium-filled vault.

(Bob Bates) And Stu's address is...

(Professor Moriarty) [Hope they don't float off].

(Dave Lebling) There was also a Zork II map that was done by another artist. That too was hung in the ImpLounge. There was no "map" in the Rand MacNally sense, though. GA

(Wizzy/Host) Okay, we'll continue with Willmore. GA, Willmore!
(John/Eleanor Kennedy) First, I'd like to thank all of you for all the joy you gave us over many years, playing, and often beta testing. I still remember the half-hour giggle fit I had when I met the sailor in ZIII. Question: Did you know there actually is an English word "grue"? For some reason, the French translation is used more in English than the English. "Frisson" GA

(Dave Lebling) "Grue" comes from an old word for "blood" (think "gruesome"). I stole it from Jack Vance, the sf/fantasy writer. (And Thank YOU!). "Grue" in French means "crane" by the way. In Montreal phone books there is a big section "Location des Grues" ("Grue Rental"). Beware! GA

(Professor Moriarty) And you thought the folding crane in TRINITY was a liberal trick.

(Meretzky) Didn't it mean something in German, too? (I remember from when Jeff was doing the translation, I think). GA

(Professor Moriarty) Now there's a game that never came out. German Zork.

(Mike Berlyn) Yes. As I recall, the word GRUE in German means lurker. GA

(Meretzky) Kinda redundant, then, to say lurking grue. ga

(ToH/Marc Sira) Marc and Dave. I have an Ancient (722 GUE) copy of Zork I That claims to have been published by Personal Software...what's the story behind that? GA

(Dave Lebling) Personal Software published our games for us before we took them over. GA

(Dave Lebling) Actually, they only did Zork I, then decided to concentrate on VisiCalc and other business products instead. GA

(ToH/Marc Sira) OK...always wondered about that (the first game I ever bought) the hit that started the addiction. ga

(Wizzy/Host) (I got Z1 on an 8" CP/M diskette <g>) Okay, FG, GA.
(Flying Gerbil) I was wondering who started the tradition of hiding "easter eggs" in all the Infocom adventures? It seems there were some even in Zork I. GA

(Meretzky) What's an easter egg?

(Bob Bates) It's what the easter bunny brings. Sheesh.

(Dave Lebling) There were easter eggs even in Colossal Cave, so it was nothing new! GA

(John/Eleanor Kennedy) Filfre is an easter egg

(Meretzky) An inside joke?

(Professor Moriarty) Filfre is a Leblingism.

(Wizzy/Host) Sorta, Steve. GA, Mike.

(Dave Lebling) It comes from "The Motto of the Implementors": "Feel free!"

(Mike Berlyn) Well, I remember that the author's name while emblazoned on the box cover, was always well hidden within the game. Finding the names or name of the author was always a fun tradition that was well under way when Suspended was written. GA

(MARC BLANK) My favourite game was Cornerstone. The best part was finding the credits.

(Wizzy/Host) GA, Steve. (hahaha, Marc!)

(Professor Moriarty) I thought the Roman Numeral I/O was cute myself.

(Mike Berlyn) hahahahaha! Wasn't FRED responsible?

(Meretzky) Bob just (via SEN) defined an easter egg for me as "a hidden reward for an obscure action". In that case I would say that Infocom games were one gigantic easter egg since all actions were unstated and left for the player to discover. GA

(Wizzy/Host) (And some were VERY obscure, too!) Okay, Stu, GA.
(Stu Galley) Maybe the egg tradition started when Personal Software published Zork I, and we wanted to supply a mail-order address for the after-market in posters, maps, and hints. So we hid the advertisement in an obscure place for folks to discover. GA

(Wizzy/Host) That do it, Gerbs?

(Flying Gerbil) Second, who thought up "Hello, Sailor" and what does it mean, if anything? GA

(Stu Galley) Okay, I'll guess: Tim Anderson put it in the ODYSSEUS poem Odysseus was a sailor, after all! -fin-

(Wizzy/Host) GA, Marc.

(MARC BLANK) Again, I believe that Bruce Daniels wrote the verse and "Hello Sailor" ga

(Wizzy/Host) (It's always meant something different to me! <g>) GA, Dave.

(Dave Lebling) Bruce wrote the original poem, which was a SINBAD poem, because he got his legends mixed up. As I recall, Tim helped on the rewrite when I pointed out that it was Odysseus who poked the Cyclops' eye out, etc. GA

(Flying Gerbil) (guess we'll never find out what it means <g>)

(MARC BLANK) Sounds right to me

(Wizzy/Host) Okay...let's go on...Ted Markley...GA

(Dave Lebling) I was supposed to be clue that the poem was about a sailor, Gerb! GA

(Ted Markley [MPS]) I know MicroProse is about to release it's first Animated Graphic Adventure the fall and wondered if authors of text adventures find it difficult to make a transition to animation or even CARE about that medium. GA

(MARC BLANK) I think that we pretty much all considered the story itself to be primary. Everything else was considered fluff. As graphics improved, and the tradeoffs improved (i.e. memory was cheaper, people had hard drives), the graphics became more palatable for us. I bet, though, that in our heart of hearts, all of us preferred the text-based games. Although, someone should mention audio...ga

(Wizzy/Host) (Audio!) Okay, Brian, GA.

(Professor Moriarty) Graphic adventure designers face a terrible

dilemma. 1. You can't do anything you can't show. 2. You can't afford to show anything! I'd go back to text in a moment if I could make a living. GA (Or audio.)

(Wizzy/Host) Okay, Steve, GA.

(Meretzky) I've pretty much worked on the extremes with the pre-graphic Infocom games and recently with LGOP2, which is an entirely-graphic point and click game with some but not a lot of text. I would say that the difference is more minor than it's made out to be; at its heart, it's still a game and has to be engaging and entertaining for all the same reasons. GA

(Wizzy/Host) (Amen!) GA, Mike.

(Mike Berlyn) Indeed, making a game is what it's all about, and in the end, if the product is evaluated for gameplay, I think all designers who worked in an all-text environment could produce equally entertaining games. But people tend to demand more and better pictures, which eats up the space available for balancing game play and adding all the great features that made the text-based games so entertaining. Phew! Enough of the verbose mode. Back to brief. GA

(Wizzy/Host) <g> Okay, Bob, GA.

(Bob Bates) As Brian said, a problem with 'graphic adventures' is that everything you want to convey to the player, you have to draw. A team of artists is much more expensive than a writer. So what tends to happen in today's games is that what gets implemented is the "right" path through a game, rather than an environment to explore. This is a great loss, in my humble opinion, but it is a competitive advantage for Legend, one which we try to exploit. On the other hand, those "one path" games seem to be what's selling these days so we continue to try to "hit 'em where they ain't". GA

(Professor Moriarty) (Or not selling, as they case may be.)

(Meretzky) But we'd rather be right than rich.

(Wizzy/Host) Okay, we'll hear from Amy, then go on. Amy, GA.

(Bob Bates) Let me write that down.

(Wizzy/Host) (then dave)

(Amy Briggs) For you in the industry, what about the future. Virtual Reality - which is primitive now, of course, but so were graphics originally. (Or Virtual Audio, Marc.) GA

(Wizzy/Host) Okay, Dave...THEN we'll go on! <g> GA, Dave.

(Dave Lebling) I think text adventures and graphics adventures are similar but fundamentally different media, like TV and movies. Not everyone can write for both, and the same is true in our industry. I think the technical advances that Amy talked about will only make that more obvious. A giant, multi-CDROM, VR adventure game is going to be as little like the current stories as they are unlike the earliest text adventures. They will also be orders of magnitude more expensive to produce, and orders of magnitude more profitable when they are successful! We are getting into the movie business, gang. GA

[TO BE CONTINUED]

EMULATING PCs ON AN ATARI ST

By Matt Newsome

The practice of emulation is very simply using the means available to impersonate another machine with the intention of being able to use the emulating machine in the same way as one would the machine you are trying to emulate. The Atari ST is capable of a number of emulations, many of these are in the Public Domain - ZX81, ZX Spectrum, Amiga and CBM 64 emulators have all been written with varying results - the Amiga attempt only actually presented a Workbench screen rather than emulating any of the functions of the Amiga itself, whereas the ZX Spectrum emulator works well, but so slowly!

Just for the moment, though, I want to look at the commercial emulators that are available. Sack Electronic GmbH hold a fairly large proportion of the market presently, with PC and AT SPEED, and AT SPEED C16, all of which are PC Emulators. I actually bought the AT SPEED chip at a show for around £200 with an STe adaptor chip for about £15 making £215 - that's a lot of money!

When you get the thing home, all's fine until you realise that you have to open your machine - invalidating the guarantee - to fit the thing. Let me make it quite clear that, despite what the companies (Compt, the UK distributor, and Seck themselves) say about the fitting, Joe Public CANNOT fit the chip himself. I tried, my father (who is VERY experienced in electronics) tried, but we all failed. Failing this, the ST and the chip were taken way up north to Compo at great expense. They fitted it. It worked.., for a week, then it crashed every time I tried to boot PC. In the end I had to take the &#%\$#%\$ thing to London where the guys who sold me the thing managed to sort it out.

Since then, I've had no problem. The other thing I must say about the chip is that when it's installed, you have the bare minimum, so without buying extras for the ST, you have an 8 mhz CGA (4 colour), one 720K drive with next to no memory (DOS takes 300K by itself). Something like that does VERY LITTLE. Well, in fact it does almost sod all. I've since bought a memory upgrade to 2 meg (£50), a 100 meg hard-drive (£450), a second drive (£50), and will probably buy a mono, hi-res monitor soon (another £120). Now don't think I'm rich, I'm an A-Level student, and that's the result of lots of hard work and saving.

In retrospect, I don't really regret buying all those bits because they work on PC and ST modes alike, but be warned, the chip with a bare ST is a bare PC! The PC SPEED chip is the predecessor of its AT brother, whilst the AT C16 (which came out about a month after my purchase of the 8 mhz version), costs about the same but is twice as fast.

From the adventurers point of view, a text adventure will work fine on a 1 meg machine with the AT-SPEED chip and a TV or MED/LO resolution monitor. On a 520 ST, it might be a squeeze, but you should be all right. Certainly the Infocom adventures and the likes of those written by Graham Cluley (eg. Jacaranda Jim and Hambug) are fine on the basic machine. Graphical adventures are slightly different. The CGA mode means four colours and cruddy graphics, but most of the earlier Sierra games work fine. I played Larry I, II and III on the PC right to the end, and at times you wish you had better graphics,

but that doesn't really impair the adventure side at all. The games that Sierra are producing now all pose a problem. If you can't get the game for the ST (which is always the first thing you should investigate - they WILL be better on the ST than on the emulated PC), you could always buy a mono monitor (Atari's SM124 is popular, about £120). This enables you to use mono VGA graphics - no colour, but you get better graphics definition and you can actually play the game!

In conclusion: I've been using the ST with emulation to continue work started on the PCs at school for about a year now without problem. It's slower, but it works and when I come across a PC only adventure, that avenue IS open to me. It's big bucks, but if you want two excellent machines for the price of one, emulation is a highly viable option, just be prepared to spend out on system upgrades.

PSYCHO-ANALYSIS OF A GRUE

By Prof. Grimwold (Doctorate in Being Dwarvish)

What is a Grue? Well, to those fortunate few who have participated in an Infocom adventure will immediately recognise the name Grue. Often with a short gasp of indrawn breath or a muffled curse. For these are not nice creatures, they are found in dark tunnels waiting on luckless adventurers who happen to wander by. Legend has it that if one was to carry a lit lamp or lantern, one would avoid these monsters, but this seems pretty poor protection. There is a large body of people who swear that carrying a bottle of the elixir, Newcastle Brown Ale with you will save you from the attentions of Grues far and wide. Not so, carrying so precious a cargo will be sure to bring even the oldest and youngest Grues out into the open long enough for them to knock you senseless and devour your body as "munchies" while supping on the brew. It seems that there is no failsafe way to avoid Grues, although Des O'Connor records played at high volume whilst one is exploring the caves of Borphee is one theory recently suggested. Although actually finding a record player and some of these records will prove difficult to find in an adventure.

So what makes a Grue prey on lonely adventurers? Could it be that he (all known Grues are "he's", which makes for some rife speculation on their reproductive cycles), is lonely and in need of company? Or is it that Sainsbury's frozen oven-ready chickens are not to his liking, or is there simply no branches of Sainsbury's in Borphee? My personal theory is that Grues suffer from the classic "Rejection Syndrome", rejected at birth (if indeed Grues are born, not just made from spare parts), and rejected through life because of their appearance. Even in adventures, eight foot tall furry monsters with large pointy teeth dripping with saliva are surely not the norm.

So instead of being scared of a Grue when one is adventuring, spare instead a little pity on the poor creature, listen to its mutterings as it tries to creep up behind you in the dark, even if it speaks with a lisp caused by talking around those fangs, try and understand its heartfelt pleas about its disfigurements. This will not save you, but you may die knowing the reason why this creature has to contain himself within the miserable tunnels of the Borphee Caves.

NEWS SECTION

AMSTRAD GLOSSY TO CHANGE NAME!

Amstrad Computer User is no more! But don't panic! It is getting a whole new look and another new name to boot! From now on it will be called CPC ATTACK (must say I prefer the first name - ah well!). Our own "Amster" will be in the new magazine as usual and he will have a name change too! No longer will he be called DUNGEON MASTER but will go under his real name of BOB ADAMS. Thank goodness the powers that be have decided that his adventure column is too good a thing to miss out.

TAX PROBLEMS SOLVED

Steve Clay wrote to tell me that people might like information on paying tax on royalty payments that they receive from software houses. If you are eligible to pay tax then the tax office produce a leaflet dealing with this matter. If you are unsure then write to your local tax office and request form IR 84.

NEW RELEASES FROM WoW SOFTWARE

Joan Pancott tells me that YARKON BLUES 2 is now available from Wow at a price of £3 on tape and £5 on disk (two part game). A new Simon Avery adventure GERBIL RIOT OF '67 is also available price £2 on tape and £4 on disc. The video of the Probe Convention is also available at £12. For more information, or to order, write to WoW Software, 78 Radipole Lane, Weymouth, Dorset.

SOFTWARE COMPANY WARNING

I understand that a firm called TURBOSOFT DISTRIBUTION have gone on extended vacation and have not been seen at their premises since February last. Perhaps it would be better not to send any further orders in that direction until they are located. If anyone has already done so and is concerned at the lack of response then please get in touch with Detective Constable R. Groves, Regional Fraud Squad, C/o Ampthill Police Station, Woburn Street, Ampthill, Beds, MK45 2HX

MANDY IS CERTIFIED AT LAST!

I am delighted to announce that I received a certificate which entitles me to become an Hon. Member of the A.F.I.O! This was kindly sent in by Simon Avery and is for "Making Adventure Probe the best fanzine available!" This now means that I can proudly add A.F.I.O.Hon.Member after my name when signing letters as well as H.Balg. I understand that Bob Adams has also been awarded this certificate. What do you mean "what does it stand for?". Erm... you really want to know? Oh, well... erm... it stands for the Association of Fools, Idiots and Others. Must be a mis-print eh Bob?

GOOD NEWS FROM THE GUILD

Tony Collins tells me that they have plenty of new games and also they have got permission to convert quite a few more of Simon Avery's games including THIEF'S TALE as well as his new ones D.A.A.W.2 and MERLIN. They should appear on the Commodore and Spectrum very soon. More good news is that they have had a new member join them, Louise Wenlock who has written a great little game on the Spectrum called I DARE YOU, which should be available by the time you read this and will be included on the next advertisement. The game comes with three sealed envelopes which will contain various clues which the player is informed to open during the game. It's a bit more packaging than their usual games but adds to the playability no end! See centre pages for the address.

PUZZLE SECTION

WORDSEARCH by Paul Cardin

G	O	R	F	L	A	T	S	Y	R	C	H	E	H	R	H	S	D	U	S	
Y	A	W	N	Q	P	W	S	U	H	I	Z	Q	Z	H	U	N	T	S	G	C
D	A	X	T	A	A	K	O	T	A	O	R	O	A	Q	N	E	Y	O	A	P
A	X	I	W	M	O	B	A	N	C	D	O	R	R	T	K	O	L	Z	W	R
R	N	P	N	B	D	A	O	D	I	O	R	E	A	W	D	W	R	T	A	I
K	O	E	E	I	E	M	R	O	R	A	P	W	L	K	I	L	O	U	U	A
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W	E	A	V	E	R	O	F	H	E	R	D	R	E	A	M	S	H	U	K	

There are fifty two adventure titles hidden in the above square. They span quite a large time scale and all have had at least one mention, however brief, in back issues of Probe. The titles are to be found forwards, backwards, up, down, diagonally forwards, diagonally backwards, etc. If the adventure title includes the word "The", this has been omitted. So have some fun and you could also win a prize! Send in your entries to Probe and all correct entries will be put in the hat and a winner drawn out. Results and winner will be published in the June issue. Closing date is 20th May 1992.

SOLUTION TO THE LAST PUZZLE/COMP

I was amazed at the number of entries for this competition! You really seemed to like this one. The solution to the puzzle was:

		£	s	d
Boys name -	Bob	-	1	-
Girls name -	Penny	-	1	
Pluto, Venus, Mars? -	Three far things(!)-			3/4
Ill sea creature -	Sick Squid (!)	-	6	-
A pig -	Guinea	-	1	-
A weight -	Pound	-	1	-
A form of transport -	Penny farthing	-		1 1/4
A singer -	Tenor	-	10	-
A leather worker -	Tanner	-		6

		18	2	9

And the winner is VINCE BARKER who wins a 6 month voucher to Probe!

ANOTHER BRAIN TEASER SENT IN BY KEITH BURNARD

You are a farmer and you go to the market to buy stock. You have to purchase EXACTLY 100 animals and you have to spend EXACTLY £100. You must buy at least one of each of the following animals on sale at the market: Pigs which cost 1 shilling each. Cows which cost £1 each. Horses which cost £5 each. It is possible - but it is darned hard to work out how to do it!

Closing date for entries is 20th May 1992.

ADVENTURING USING 3.5" SECOND DISC DRIVE
By Simon Avery

This is just a short article for anyone using Romdos or Ramdos with a three and a half inch second disc drive on the Amstrad.

These drives are very useful things, using a special format program that comes included with Ramdos, you can get just below 800K space on a single disc. Compare that with 178K per side of a three inch drive and you're laughing! I use a Siren drive which can read either side of the disc so you don't even have to swap sides on the drive at all!

Anyway, what most people are concerned about is the compatibility of certain games with Romdos or Ramdos which automatically recognise the extra space on the second drive. So, I shall list the various types of adventures and how to deal with them one by one.

GACed games - These are adventures written with GAC, they can be most easily recognised by saving you position. GACed games give you a choice between saving to disc or tape. All the GAC games I have work perfectly on the second drive, although the saved positions are automatically saved to drive A. If you don't want to keep a separate 3" disc for game saves, the when you are asked for the filename, type in;

BYFILENAME. This saves to drive B although to load the position back in, you must remember to prefix the filename with B:

Duillled games, written on the Duill utility, these games provide the most problems. Early adventures written with version A01 of the Duill (those that don't have the 'save-to-disc' option) work OK with Ramdos, but not with Romdos. Later versions (that save to disc or tape automatically) will not work with either. The problem is that Romdos and Ramdos take up part of the memory that Duill uses itself and that makes Duill, and the games written with it, to crash on loading.

PAWed games - These work perfectly. Since they run under CPM, you must put your CPM work disc in drive A and your PAW games disc in drive B. Type !CPM then RAMDOS2 (or if you're using CPM+, type RAMDOS+) then when that has loaded, type B: !CPM (or for IB) you can then DIR the disc to see what is on it and load it by just typing the filename as you would in a normal single drive setup.

INFOCOMS - No worries here! All the infocom games that I have work perfectly on drive B. To load, follow the same routine as a Fawed game. You can get five or six Infocoms on a single 3.5" disc with room for saved positions left over.

BASIC adventures - There shouldn't be any problems running any basic game, adventure or otherwise. The only hassle you may have is the saved positions. The only way to get around this is to list the program and look for the save routine and change a !A command. This is unlikely though, most basic games work ok.

OTHER adventures - These are too numerous to mention, they all use different ways to read the disc or memory. The best way is to try it and see.

The best way to transfer files to a second drive is to use NSWP which is available from many public domain libraries or from me along with several other public domain CPM files for 50p copying fee and a disc and a SSAE. If you have any problems transferring or running adventures on a second drive, drop me a line and I'll see what I can do. Please enclose a SSAE though.

71 FOFSE ST, CHUDLEIGH, S DEVON, TQ13 0HT

A second disc drive for the Amstrad can be bought at the very reasonable price of £104 from Siren Software, Wilton House, Bury Rd, Radcliffe, Manchester M26 9UR inclusive of postage and packing. This also includes Romdos, Ramdos, several utilities and a six socket Rombox.

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ST readers can get a copy of the base game and synopsis by sending them a blank disk along with a 1st class stamp. A conversion to other formats (8 and 16-bit) is planned so other readers can get a copy of the game messages and synopsis by sending them an SAE.



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A004 HACK

Adv A014 THE GOLDEN FLEECE(1 meg) Adv

A005 MIDNIGHT THIEF

Adv A015 THE HOLY GRAIL (1 meg) Adv

A006 RINGS OF ZON (1 meg)

Arc AD16 MILLER LITE DEMO Music

A007 MEGABALL (1 meg)

Arc A017 ESCHER PAINTINGS Graph

A008 COLOSSUS/WORLD/ADV.WRITER

Adv/Utia018 FULL FORCE MEGA UTILS Util

A009 EXCALIBUR

Arc A019 LARN/COLOSSAL/ADV.WRITER

A010 AMIGA ADVENTURE

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ADVICE WANTED PLEASE: Does anyone know of a reputable source of PC Public Domain software, especially adventures? Contact: JOHN FERRIS, 8 Frankwell Drive, Coventry, W Midlands, CV2 2FB.

ATARI ST OR PC SOFTWARE WANTED: BUREAUCRACY. Atari ST version preferred but if not the PC version would be welcome. Contact: MATT NEWSOME, The Limes, 20a York Road, Cheam, Surrey, SM2 6HH.

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PC SOFTWARE WANTED: I am looking for ULTIMA 5. Must be complete original and I would be prepared to pay around £10 for this. Also I have a problem with ULTIMA 4 - I can't find the Rune of Valour which I know is in Jhelom. I have been told to ask Nostro but can't find him either! Anyone got any ideas to help? Contact: JULIAN GREGORY, 27 Wentworth Drive, Broadstone, Dorset, BH18 8EJ.

SPECTRUM SOFTWARE FOR SALE: All originals: THE HERMITAGE 128K, NEVER ENDING STORY 128K, INSPECTOR FLUKEIT, STAR WRECK, THE BOGGIT, TEN LITTLE INDIANS, TIME MACHINE, SAVAGE ISLAND PT 1, FAIRLIGHT 128K, BIG SLEAZE, GREMLINS, LOADS OF MIDNIGHT, COLOUR OF MAGIC all at £1 each + 50p p&p. KAYLETH, REBEL PLANET, MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE, THE HOBBIT, SORCEROR OF CLAYMORGUE CASTLE, LORDS OF MIDNIGHT, DRILLER, SENTINAL all at £2 each + 50p p&p. All are adventures apart from Sentinel which is just downright annoying! AMIGA SOFTWARE WANTED: CHAOS STRIKES BACK. Contact: ANNA S PARKER, Birchwood, Nunclose, Armathwaite, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA4 9TN. Tel: 06992 253 DAYTIME.

LETTERS

Dear Mandy

Well, yesterday the meeting of the London Area Probers took place, despite the efforts of the IRA to prevent it. We all arrived at Liverpool Street Station to find that the area had been almost completely cordoned off by police, and the wine bar that was to be our venue had all its upstairs windows blown in. (It was consequently closed). However, adventurers to the core, we all managed to locate each other by wandering around the station looking hopeful, and in the case of one or two less-easy-to-recognise individuals, clutching the latest copy of Probe. I hope we didn't miss anyone, but we did continue with this procedure for at least an hour and a half, and took it in turns to patrol the area with (as Sharon so graphically put it) our Probies out! At one-thirty we all (16 of us by now) piled into a tube train and left the devastated city area to find a fairly suitable pub close to Charing Cross Station. There we stayed until around 8pm, when we started reluctantly to disperse, vowing to meet again sometime around the end of July, thus neatly filling the yawning gap between now and the Probe Convention in October

Sue Roseblade, St Neots, Cambs.

I'm so glad you all managed to have a good time, despite the bombing. It was good of you all to hang around waiting just in case other readers turned up, for as long as you did. There were a few disappointed people who didn't manage to find you though, but perhaps now they see your letter they will understand why things went wrong. I hope you all manage to meet up next time and have a lovely mini-Convention.....Mandy

Dear Mandy

I travelled up to London today only to find the wine bar we were having our London Probers meeting, and all the surrounding streets roped off! This, of course, was after I had checked with BR that there was no dispute in the Liverpool Street Station area, after the bomb.

Jenny Perry, Hampton, Middx.

It seems that you were one of the Probers who didn't manage to find the main bunch of mini-Conventioneers, Janny. I'm sorry that your trip was wasted. I hope that you will manage to attend the next one as I am sure you will have a fantastic time.....Mandy

Dear Mandy

At last some free time to catch up on all the letters I have to write! It was nice to read Phil Glover's letter in April's Probe. As a member of his SAM ADVENTURE CLUB I can tell you that he's doing a great job promoting interest in the Sam, writing his clubdisk, helping playtest Sam games and converting Spectrum PAWed games to Sam disk storage. In fact, anything except any of his beloved gardening! I think it's a case of tackling the weeds or tackling the unanswered letters - he always seems to do the latter! It is rather sad about CRASH being merged with another magazine as Ian Osbourne was doing a good job filling the few pages that the magazine let him loose on. I wish him the best of luck with the Zzap! column. As long as he doesn't stop contributing spectrum stuff for Probe in favour of Commodore stuff.

Gareth Pitchford, Ellesmere Port.

Dear Mandy

At last ZZAP 64 have realised that there is a need for an adventure section in their magazine, which hopefully will get other Commodore 64 users interested in adventure games. The last such-like magazine to carry a section was Your Commodore which has now changed to a new name and dropped the adventure column. If I remember rightly it was written by Paul Rigby. I would also like to know why Ron Guest (March Issue) has a copy of Scapeghost lying around unfinished when other 64 users (namely me!) would love to have a copy in my collection. But joking aside I have to agree with Ron that I would give up the ghost if I had suffered the same experiences as he did with Commodore magazines. So therefore I have to say I cannot blame Ron for turning to the Speccy which seems to have an extremely well run and supported adventure market. Hopefully the Commodore 64 market will now come alive as well.

Ken Chambers, Coventry.

Dear Mandy

I liked the latest issue of Probe (April), especially the Unusual Gifts by Steve Clay and the "Cookery" by Simon Avery. With wit like that 'Probe should go on forever, subject to the editor.

Colin Steele, John Fisher Street, London

Don't worry, Colin, as I have said before, I edit Probe purely for the love of it. I can't imagine not doing it so, as long as I continue to receive contributions to keep it going then Probe will keep popping onto your doormats. I'm not surprised you liked the wit. You should have seen me while I was typing them up - tears were streaming down my face with laughing. Mandy

Dear Mandy

Well, what can I say? It's a matter of hours since I received my first copy of 'Probe and already I'm writing to you! It's brilliant! I read the whole thing without finding a page that didn't interest me. The conference with ex-Infocom staff was fascinating as was Alex McEwan's article on the re-released Infocom titles - I want one! I just hope he hasn't sold his other copies yet! Anyway, on with the letter - firstly, the mag's excellent, secondly, this Grue fella really seems to know his adventure from his arcade durge. It's encouraging to see that there is still as much respect and interest in the Infocom titles as in the good old days - they're quality pieces of software. When I read the introductory letter, I doubted the "family" style of Probe, but having read a copy, those doubts have been crushed. The letters and articles read like a group of friends in a room chatting over a cup of tea. A style such as this is enviable, unique, and is something that you should be proud of. Thanks for mailing April's copy to me so quickly - I'm very much looking forward to the May edition. Yours with much satisfaction.

Floyd AKA Matt Newsome, Cheam, Surrey.

I'm delighted that Probe has received another extremely enthusiastic new member. I'm also delighted that you have plunged in wholeheartedly and sent an excellent article for inclusion too. Everyone loves to hear from new readers and I am pleased that you do not suffer from the shyness that seems to attack new readers - making them feel that they can't contribute for a few months for some strange reason. Yes, Floyd, Infocom is still alive and well within the pages of Probe at least and many of us long for the good old days when we avidly waited for the next new release from the "Rolls Royce" of adventure houses. There were times when new readers wrote in to ask about Infocom and they were able to look out for the titles and play them.

Sadly I now have to tell them that, unless they can get hold of a second hand Infocom they will never be able to play one on their particular machine. PC owners are lucky in that they can get THE LOST TREASURES OF INFOCOM. It would be nice if this compilation were made available for other machines too.....Mandy

Dear Mandy

Following my letter in January a letter from a fellow reader suggested the Multiface 3 was the answer to the Plus 3 disc problem. I sent my order off to Romantic Robot (delivery was a bit slow, 6 weeks, but as Multiface is on special offer at the moment Romantic Robot probably had a bit of a rush on). I was pleasantly surprised to find that saving 48K tapes to Plus 3 discs was a doddle. Piracy is discouraged as the Multiface 3 is necessary to reload the saved games. It makes it even more puzzling that mega company Amstrad were unable or couldn't be bothered to make the Plus 3 compatible with 48K software when Romantic Robot with a little add-on box and one button managed it with such simplicity!

Ron Guest, Firthpark, Sheffield.

Dear Mandy

Following on from The Grue's excellent (spit) article last month on AGT, Ken Bond and I have also been using this adventure writer on our Amiga's. I agree with everything Grue said about it's power and flexibility but I have also found a short-cut to speed up the compiling time problem. If you load all of your adventure data files into RAM along with the compile program and run the compile in RAM, then this greatly reduces the time taken. There are also one or two bugs that have occurred on the Amiga version that have as yet not been resolved by the American converters. Not anything disastrous so far, because the flexibility of the AGT language - a sort of Basic/Pascal hybrid - allows you to find alternative ways of programming the same event, but it's only fair to warn prospective users that this is not yet a fully finished version. Some of the keywords mentioned in the manual just simply don't work. Also, because it was originally designed to be used on the piddly memory of a PC, it runs out of usable nouns (objects) when you try to make use of the much larger memory available on the Amiga. Although a "Big" version was promised with double the amount of everything, Ken Bond tells me that after speaking to the authors in America, that this larger version is still some way off. Vapourware? Despite these small niggles, I am continuing to convert HELVERA - MISTRESS OF THE PARK over to the Amiga with it (quick plug there a'la L. Horsfield), and I think it is the best text adventure writer I've seen so far on the Amiga. Well worth the 25 dollars shareware fee.

Bob Adams, Welwyn Garden City.

Dear Mandy

I'd like to protest at a disturbing development in writing today. That of the restrictions of freedom in today's literature. Restrictions imposed by, what can only be described as, terrorists. I aim my protestations at that despicable organisation "The Hobbit Adulation Society". After writing my recent piece about the Hobbit and the ST I have received abuse and numerous death threats from the HAS which has resulted in the unfortunate situation where I have had to move in with Salmon Rushdie. A move that is doubly distressing as the man never washes his socks. Combine that with his constant praying to Allah at every conceivable opportunity and the 36 bodyguards required whenever I venture out to the corner shop for a bottle of milk and you can see my predicament. I call upon the Home

Office to issue an immediate ultimatum. Either the HAS desist in their scandalous campaign or the Government issue sanctions of no adventure games for 12 months. I wait with dwindling hope. Finally, I have started to write the adventure column for ST Action and, unlike my predecessor, will be reviewing adventures and including news of new titles. So, if you wish to see your new game in those illustrious glossy pages or if you would like to tell me of an upcoming title write to me care of ST Action's address and I'll do my best to include every contribution received.

Paul Rigby, ST Action.

Excellent news about the column, Paul. I wish you all the very best and every success. If any new readers are wondering what the first part of Paul's letter was about it refers to an earlier issue which contained an article by Paul which mentions the Hobbit (rather unfavourably) and the tongue in cheek letter which followed in the next issue.....Mandy

Dear Mandy

As you know I have been helping out Tony Collins at The Guild with some of his conversion work, mainly Spectrum games to the Amstrad and to help me with this work I recently got myself a Spectrum so that I could actually see what I was converting rather than just working from printouts that Tony was sending me. Also it gave me a chance to play the adventures before converting them. Anyway, to get to the point of my letter, Tony has asked me to switch my efforts to converting Amstrad games to the Spectrum and "why is this?" you may ask. It seems the Amstrad owning adventurers have stopped playing adventures. Tony has had very few sales for his Amstrad games and the time and effort that goes into converting the games could be better spent on Spectrum conversions which are selling well. Now it can't be the quality of the games as many of them have been good sellers on the Spectrum and include quite a few of Jack Lockerby's excellent adventures, so it must be either that the recession is hitting Amstrad adventurers harder than the Spectrum adventurers or perhaps the Mark Eltringham fiasco of last year is putting adventurers off buying from small home grown outfits such as The Guild. It would be a shame if the many more games that Tony has ready for conversion to the Amstrad were never done due to the lack of interest from the Amstrad owning adventurers.

Philip Reynolds, Oldham, Lancs.

Dear Mandy

It was good to talk to you on the phone the other day and thanks again for the help you gave me on THE FOUR SYMBOLS. It is such a great game and I am now getting on fine since I got to the cemetery and found the corpse - what a brilliant description of a corpse - the best I have ever read, I could even feel being splattered by the blood! I was really getting withdrawal symptoms as Probe seemed to take longer to arrive this month. Everytime the postman came I was either first there to check the mail or when I came in from work my first words were "has my Adventure Probe arrived yet?". It really is such a wonderful mag to have each month - I have given up on most glossies except Amiga Action which has an adventure column in it. What does annoy me about some glossies is that they have a tendency to print a full solution to a new adventure which has only just hit the streets - surely this must mean bad news for the meg and for people who are playing the adventure. I myself always look through to see if the solution to a game is the one I am playing and if so I don't buy the mag. I think I mentioned that I sent off for the video of the

Convention and now that I have seen it I know what I have been missing. The video is 100%! It is so professionally done and I for one enjoyed every minute of the video and have now seen it quite a few times so now I can put names to the faces that I have been writing to!
Steve McLaren, Margate, Kent.

You know Steve, I can almost guarantee that your tea will taste much nicer if you greet your wife and give her a kiss when you get back from work before you start asking where Probe is!!! (only kidding). I'm glad you are enjoying FOUR SYMBOLS. It is one of the best games I've played in ages - just one small point though. I don't think you got everything you needed from the cemetery before you got splattered with blood. Be very careful as in that area you must remember the saying "It is always better to give than receive" - in other words, you should give something before you can get something!.....Mandy

Dear Mandy

Just thought I'd let you know that there is another marathon under my belt! I ran in the London Marathon yesterday, and while I didn't do as well as I did in Dublin (I haven't been training as hard as I should over the winter), I was reasonably happy with my time of 3hrs and 23 minutes. I got my video of the Probe convention, and was most impressed with the professional presentation. It was nice seeing all the faces (especially the Grue - he didn't look at all like I expected) and seeing my letter read out. Keep up the good work.

Jim MacBrayne, Newton Mearns, Glasgow.

I am delighted to hear that people who couldn't attend the Convention have been buying the video - now everyone can see what went on behind the scenes and see all the people whose names you have read in Probe so often. If anyone has missed the order form then it is available for £12 (over 1 hour of film!) from WoW Software, 78 Radipole Lane, Weymouth, Dorset. Cheques etc payable to J.G. Pancott.....Mandy

PERSONAL COLUMN

To GRIMWOLD and LADY HELENE: Thank you for being there in my hour of darkness. The drinks are on me in October! Commiserations to Paul Schofield for downgrading to a Commodore Amoeba. Ho er, er, hum (?) From HEIRONYMOUS P. ARKWRIGHT, Jedi Knight and Tummy Tickler Extraordinaire!

Please can I publically thank LARRY HORSFIELD for ringing me on Saturday 11th April. I was going to go to the London Probers Convention and Larry phoned me to tell me about the bomb at Liverpool Street, which I did not know about. I'm sure everyone can imagine the chaos in the area, so thank you again Larry, hope to see you at the next one - happy adventuring and keep writing!.....KEITH GREEN

Yo Jonathan Scott in Londonderry - thanks for the compliment! May your magic wand never bend! Best wishes always.....KRAZY KEZ

To J.W. in Rochdale - I know you're out there! I'm still working on that 128K Speccy game! R.S.V.P.....K.K.G

ADVICE FOR ADVENTURE AUTHORS

By Dorothy Mittard

After reading Paul Cardin's interesting article in February 1992 'Probe', I would like to add my comments. I disagree with Paul that all lines should be justified. Most times this is a matter of choice, but I don't like the gaps caused by justification, especially when they are large. Some additional things to watch out for include:

Be consistent throughout the game, for example if you start off using a capital N for north then use a capital all the way through. Leave at least one space after a comma, full stop, colon or semi-colon. Decide which tense the adventure is written in, i.e. the past, present or future and stick with it. In particular look out for words like "was" and "is" or "it's". When referring to the player, e.g. I, WE or YOU keep it consistent. Don't refer to I at the beginning and YOU later on. It is better to start a new sentence rather than continually use the word "and". Be careful when choosing colour and make sure the text is easily readable, for example red on blue "bleeds".

HELP WANTED

"Could someone please tell me how to open the safe in ESCAPE TO FREEDOM?"

MRS M. KING, 53 Beaufort St, Southend on Sea, Essex, SS2 4NQ

"I am struggling with INTO THE MYSTIC. Has anyone any suggestions on how to enter the huge building in the meadow or how to get up the mountain or how to get the key from the monastery? I would be grateful for any help you can give."

G.BAILEY, 71 Howards Lane, Rowtown, Addlestone, Surrey, KT15 1ES

"In RINGS OF MEDUSA, how can I find the last two rings? According to the hints they are on the Islands. I can only find 1 island and there is no ring there. Please could someone help?"

FRED DARLINGTON, 33 Winckley Rd, Broadgate, Preston, Lancs, PR1 8FL
Telephone 0772 51737

"Please can anyone help me before I go cuckoo over KINGS QUEST 5? I need some help as I have nearly finished the adventure but I am stuck. I am standing in front of Mordacks contraption, I have put Mordacks wand on the left platter and Crispins wand on the right platter. Can anyone tell me what happens next. Also could anyone give me the directions round the catacombs, I just went round randomly until I found the door and don't relish doing that again?"

STEVE McLAREN, 6 Mere Gate, Margate, Kent, CT9 5TR
Telephone 0843 299819

"I am having some bother with level 10 of BLACK CRYPT. I've retrieved the three idols of Temin and placed them in the three alcoves, whereupon the Dragon Lich appears and, in the space of a few seconds, kills the entire party! Can anyone tell me of a sure fire way of killing the Dragon Lich, or am I being too slow on the old mouse?"

PAUL VINCENT, 90 Gilpin Cres, Pelsall, Walsall, W Mids, WS3 4HY
Telephone 0922 692297

POETS CORNER

IN THE SHADOW OF THE GRUE (OR - WHERE THE HELL'S THOSE MATCHE-EYAAAARGH!!!!)

Down in the caverns of Ormskirk way,
An adventurer dared to walk,
With a dwarf, an elf and a small osprey,
He'd decided the Grue to stalk!
And a fearsome creature was the Grue,
All hairy was its behind,
The hide of the Grue is priceless it's true,
Now if only this bum they could find!
The company rested at a waft for the night,
Of ale drank the dwarf with pride,
The elf and adventurer began to talk,
And the osprey just sat and sighed.
"These are dangerous times my fearless men",
The adventurer droned on and on,
"When we capture our Grue - what do we do then?"
But for reply - alas - there came none!
The dwarf fell from his post all a-drunk,
The osprey had died of fright,
The elf gave a cry and "did a bunk",
The adventurer was ALONE tonight!
And the cause of such fear did manifest,
In a mighty shadow 'tis told,
'Twas the Grue standing there in his old string vest,
The adventurer's blood ran cold!
Such a scene! such a thing! such an ugly beast!
Matted hair and dribbling saliva,
An acne-covered face the colour of yeast,
And the Grue didn't look too nice either!
"Oy!" said the Grue, "Who are you to come,
Interrupting my evening sleep?",
The adventurer cried, "I'm a revered one,
Who hunts Grue hides - so weep!"
"My collection is priceless - for I've many hides,
Gathered from here to Jamaica,
You're next on the list for my precious prize,
So kneel down and pray to your maker!"
Thus said, the adventurer weilded his sword,
And a Winchester point twenty-two,
A cheating adventurer and shotgun abroad,
Was this the end of our Grue?
In one or two seconds (or so we figure),
"Eat Birdseed!" the adventurer cried,
But before his finger could pull on the trigger,
'Twas HE not the Grue who had died!
For who should have called just at that time,
To save our poor Grue's bum?
But a giant hungry 'Amster who swallowed a prime
Adventurer into his tum!
"Thanks for the invite your Grueness", said 'Amster,
"That snack was - oh - quite a winner!"
"I'm glad you showed up" said Grue to 'Amster,
Now let's go and have some dinner!"
"What's cooking today?", said 'Amster to Grue,
And Grue looked around the old warf,
He smiled as he found a treat oh-so-true,
Grue grinned, "I hope you like dwarf!"

KRAZY KEZ GRAY

YOUR STARS FOR MAY

By *Anastasia*

Sign of the month - TAURUS.

Generally, Taurean adventurers will play any type of adventure quite happily, as long as they have a constant supply of coffee and nibbles! One thing Taureans do not like is leaving an adventure unfinished - they will nearly always bettle on to finish each one they buy. An extremely favourable aspect between Venus and the Moon at the beginning of the May will bring a pleasant encounter. Romantically, mid-month will prove to be full of surprises. Finance is well aspected after the 18th. Healthwise you shouldn't have many problems but take care around the 12th.

GEMINI.

May will start off slowly for Geminis, but this will be quite beneficial - you deserve a rest! Don't try to hurry things along too much as this may disrupt other people who will be working with your interests at heart. Beware of the 7th and 28th when people may be out to get your money, don't sign without reading the small print! Your social life will pick up towards the end of May.

CANCER.

Easy relations with work colleagues is forecast. Luck will play her part this month, you could be pleasantly surprised! Study is also forecast and you may be learning new skills. Take care in late May when people may make empty or false promises.

LEO.

Finance and business matters are well aspected this month with money problems being alleviated. Opportunity will present itself mid-month but you will have to reach out and actively grab it! Your family may seem disagreeable on the 16th, this applies especially toward Leo parents and their children.

VIRGO.

A visitor this month will lift your spirits and will cheer up a matter you may have been worrying over. Travel is also favoured, possibly connected with romance. You may feel like re-decorating your home, or changing your lifestyle in some way. Do not underestimate your talents this month - push yourself forward and see what happens!

LIBRA.

This is a good month to invest money in long term projects, take out insurance policies and so on. Take care on the 19th to the 22nd, when people will be out to trick you. You may have to cancel plans due to a youngster around the 7th. Your temper will be frayed in May, and you may have trouble keeping your diplomatic cool! Socially, the last few days should be very busy.

SCORPIO.

Romantic matters will take the driving seat, and existing partnerships will be strengthened. Single Scorpions may pop the question to their loved ones. Your work situation will demand extra commitment but promotion could result. You may be accident prone around the 12th and 28th - take care!

SAGITTARIUS.

Hard working Sagittarians will find their efforts rewarded this month. If you are looking out for a new job this could be your month. Creative matters may bring you extra recognition and sporty matters will kindle your interest. Minor arguments will be sorted out by 28th.

CAPRICORN. Try to keep a low profile this month, work colleagues will view your assertiveness as aggression and will work against you. Domestic disagreements could disrupt your routine. Recreational pursuits are highlighted, as is short range travel. If you are involved in

education you will make easy progress and could even hear favourable news concerning your career.

AQUARIUS.

Home improvements are indicated whether this be improving your home or moving house, now is the time to go ahead. Financial problems will be easily overcome. Short trips play a part in May and your life may seem busier in general but try not to hurry too much on the 12th and 28th as your physical energy may be low. Try not to mix business with pleasure this month.

PISCES.

After a chaotic start to the month things will ease off after the 5th. New friendships are aspected from mid-month onwards and someone will be in a position to help you. Catch up on your correspondence the first two weeks, especially if it concerns legal matters. Take care around the 12th and 28th you may have some unforeseen expenditure.

ARIES.

Mars, your ruling planet enters your sign on the 5th and this will give you a tremendous surge of energy. You will feel ready to meet any challenges and may have to make a few snap decisions but this will all turn out for the best. Money worries should fade during May. Try not to upset people on 12/13th and pay special attention to underlying influences regarding close family.

A-MAZE-ING ESCAPES

SPIRO LEGACY

By *Steve McLaren* - AMIGA

This maze is not easy as it is a proper hedge maze so the maze from the entrance way is:

N, N, E, S, E, E, E, N, N, W, N, E, N, W, S, W, W, W, N, W, to the centre of the maze, do what you have to do there. The way out is not a reversal of the way in so go:

S, E, E, E, E, N, E, S, W, S, E, S, S, W, W, W, W, N, W, S, S and you are safely out again.

THESEUS AND THE MINOTAUR

By *Simon Avery* - AMSTRAD CPC

Part two of this game contains the Labyrinth, a big and taxing maze. To get to the centre (from where you are chucked in):

S, SW, W, W, SE, E, SE, SW, E, S, SW, SW, W, N, N, SE, NE, W, NW, N, E, S, make sure you have the Dagger first though to kill the Minotaur. To get out again go:

N, W, S, S, S, E, E, E, N, W, N, N, NE, N.

FISHING FOR RED HERRINGS

THE O ZONE

By *Dennis Dowda* 77 - SPECTRUM
KNIFE, NAIL, FUSE and VEST.

THE HOBBLE HUNTER

By *Dennis Dowda* 77 - SPECTRUM
PENCIL, SAW BLADE, HANKY, FLINT and BELLOWS.

HINTS AND TIPS

THE SPIRO LECACY

By *Steve McLaren* - AMIGA

To get past the blob, throw garlic.

To set the monkey free, open cupboard, search junk, find nitric acid, examine cage, examine monkey, pour acid on padlock, open cage. If you can't go east from the chamber cast fido on me and you will see some invisible barriers.

KINCS QUEST IV

By *Steve McLaren* - AMIGA

So old Jonah could not keep out of the whales stomach - this is a bit tricky. To reach the whales tonsils you have to climb the whales tongue from the bottom left to the top centre and make sure you save when you get so far up the tongue. To get out of the whale make sure you have a feather. Remember what happens when you get a tickle in your throat?

CURSED BE THE CITY

By *Jenny Perry* - COMMODORE 64

Scream to start off. Remember to examine Sudo.

Cut the cocoon to find something you will need.

When the silver sphere spins a web around you, pick up the staff and use it quickly.

There are three levels to the lift.

You can cut the rope bridge at either end but save the game before finding out which side of the bridge is the correct one to cut.

Push the corner of the grey slab.

THE WHITE FEATHER COAT

By *George Kersey* - SPECTRUM

At the door to the dungeon the answer to the riddle is - LOVE. The next riddle is in the passage after you leave the princesses room, you find a cobweb made out of words. The answer is - BLACKSMITH.

At the gate in the forest the answer to the riddle is - TREE.

THE DARKEST ROAD

By *Dennis Dowda 77* - SPECTRUM

Give the food to the dog.

Stare into the changeling eyes.

Insert the diamond into the idol.

Wait in the moors for a wind.

Tie the rope to the cat.

Stand still when you see the wraiths.

JESTER QUEST

By *Dennis Dowda 77* - SPECTRUM

PART ONE:

Push the gnome into the cesspit.

Throw the rose and the manifesto into the cauldron.

Wear the armour to turn gorgon into stone.

Tell Mr Pillock a joke.

To pass Tebbs say to Priest "follow me".

PART TWO:

Give the figs to the Unicorn.

Eat the biscuit to reach the chain.

Crush the bane.

Drink the ale for a lifting experience.

Ring the bell on the battlements to bring out the guards.

THE TIME LORDS AMULET
By *Dorothy Mittard* - COMMODORE 64

Attack the centipede to finish up on the wall.

You will need a ladder to find the lifestone.

Strike the staff to transport to the water's edge but first pat the furry creature.

To find the boat THROW ROPE when next to the lake.

THE TREASURE OF SANTA MARIA

By *Aif Baldwin* - SPECTRUM

You can't open the wardrobe in the bedroom or the iron box so don't waste time trying.

Move the box to find a hammer with which to remove the nail preventing the drawer from opening.

Use the mirror to reflect the light from the window onto the lining of the desk drawer to read the writing.

Fill the syringe with the ink remover and drop the bottle. You can only carry just the items you will need.

Don't light the candle, just remove the wick which you will need later. When you reach the quayside, choose Wally to take you to the wreck.

You will not have been able to carry everything you will need, so drop one item here and while Wally is preparing his boat, go back to the cottage and get the item you haven't got. When you return you can drop the bus ticket and pick up the item you dropped. Before boarding Wally's boat you should have with you the Very pistol, the nail, the syringe, the wick, the hosepipe and the Christmas stocking.

PRISON BLUES

By *Dave Adams* - AMSTRAD

Make a spade from the sign in the canteen and the broom.

Pull the tile in the toilet and play draughts with the prisoner.

SUBSUNK

By *Dave Adams* - AMSTRAD

Wear the aftershave before entering the cold-store.

Take the yoghurt somewhere hot to melt it.

CASE OF THE BEHEADED SMUGGLER

By *Ben Whitford* - SPECTRUM

PART ONE:

Pull the flowerpot.

Examine the snow by the gate.

Pull the tip of the walking stick.

Tap the panel in the library, then pull it.

When on the landing, throw the rope from the chest.

PART TWO:

The addresses you will need are:

137 Tottenham Court Rd (H.Q. of the Fellowship of Swords)

Albert Dock (George Wathley's Office)

To get transport "Hail" a cab then "say" the place you wish to go to.

Pull the curtain cord and say "fellow". Hit the man to get the sword.

The key the man in the opium den has unlocks the drawer in Maudsleys desk. To get the key, give the man a pipe.

ARNOLD II

By *Gareth Pitchford* - SPECTRUM

Sit on the chair.

Examine the cage and use the hamster wheel to mend the cart.

Give the cabbage to the young lad.

Search the rubble.

BUGS AND AMUSING RESPONSES

SPELLBREAKER

By *Jeremy Smith*

Near the end of the game I found myself in a comfy prison. There was a cabinet in there with a vellum scroll inside it. I had heard somewhere that if I made myself smaller with a spell I could climb into the cabinet earlier on in the game and grow larger when the spell wore off, thus killing me. If a player died in the prison later on in the past the game would end because their past would be no longer. I found that they had not included the GAME END if dead in comfy prison check in the cabinet, so I just returned into the game, frotzed the magic cube and went straight to the end of the game.

QUEST FOR THE GARDEN OF EDEN

By *Dorothy Mittard*

I was having trouble playing this game, so entered a few pokes and had a look at the listing in order to find out why things were going wrong. Detailed below are some of the things I found: The game will crash with a "Bad Subscript Error" if you try to drop an item when you are carrying ten items. The way around this is never to carry more than nine, then everything should be ok. In order to examine items carried you must type EXAMIN (leave out the E). Information can be gleaned by asking Robin Hood but you must run the words together, e.g. ROBINHOOD. Apart from this it isn't a bad game really, despite the fact that you must type directions in full i.e. WALK NORTH and there is no save facility which is a nuisance. Still it is a very old game but I thought that this information may be of interest to anyone who might like to get it back off the shelf where it has probably been discarded.

BUGS ETC SENT IN BY - *The Demented Destroyer*

I once trod on a cockroach that went squeich!

In CORYA - THE WARRIOR SAGE, despite typing HELP 76 times, I received none at all! - Spooky!?

In SPECTRE OF CASTLE CORIS, if you type QUIT, followed by Y and then N, the computer resets itself!

PRECISION CORNER

PUB QUEST

By *Dorothy Mittard - COMMODORE*

Although I obtained a solution to this game I continually died in the sewers because the torch melted. I'm sure someone out there must have had similar problems so here is the answer. Eventually I worked out that you must switch it off regularly to cool it down.

ALTAIR FOUR

By *Dorothy Mittard - COMMODORE*

I did reasonably well all the way through this game and much to my frustration got stuck at the very end. I entered the appropriate word given to me in the computer room and the screen told me that everything was OK but still I didn't go anywhere. Eventually I worked out that the command needed to complete the game is TYPE FLY!

CONTRIBUTIONS WOULD BE WELCOME FOR THIS SECTION PLEASE

GETTING YOU STARTED

GODS OF WAR

By *Dennis Dowdall* - SPECTRUM

SW, GET GASSTAFF, GET MASK, NW, E, WEAR MASK, KILL DRUID WITH GASSTAFF, SEARCH DRUID, GET MONEY, W, REMOVE MASK, DROP MASK, SE, NE, NW, GET BRANCH, NW, DIP BRANCH INTO PIT, SW, E, LIGHT BRANCH, SE, OPEN HATCH, TIE ROPE TO HATCH, THROW TORCH INTO HATCH, CLIMB ROPE, GET TORCH, E, E, PUSH SWITCH, W, W, N, NE, NW, READ NOTICE.....

THE OPPRESSED LAND

By *Dennis Dowdall* - SPECTRUM

INVENTORY (a blunt sword), SEARCH LOG, GET WAND, E, N, N, N (a villager asks you "have you seen my dog"), SAY YES (he tells you to get him), E, S, MOVE ROCK, GET STONE, SHARPEN SWORD, DROP STONE, W, S, S, W, S, S, W (a warlock appears), TALK TO WARLOCK (he asks you "have you seen my wand"), GIVE WAND, GET WINE, E, KNOCK, E, EXAMINE FIREPLACE, EXAMINE MANTLE, SAY CAN I HAVE KEY.....

MIDNIGHT THIEF

By *Steve McLaren* - AMIGA

You start in the tavern sitting down having a nice quiet drink when this chap appears and asks you to do an errand for him.. He gives you a parchment, READ PARCHMENT (these are the items you must get by hook or by crook), GET TANKARD, DRINK ALE, GET STOOL, OPEN DOOR, W, N, N, (blacksmiths), EXAMINE WALL, STEAL DAGGER, BURN STOOL, S, W, NW (tailors shop), GET NEEDLE, SE, S, S, W, EXAMINE STRAW, OPEN RUCKSACK, EXAMINE RUCKSACK, GET LAMP.....

RINGS OF ARTEK

By *Philip Reynolds* - AMSTRAD

It is important that you save the game frequently during the initial stages of this game as there is a random death routine that will kill you frequently until you have obtained the charm from the three witches, so for the first part save at regular intervals. S, E, E, SWIM, E, S, E, S, E, S, W, S, EXAMINE WELL, GET IRON KEY, N, E, N, W, N, W, N, W, SWIM, W, W, N, W, N, W, N, EXAMINE FURNISHINGS, GET STEEL KEY, W, CLIMB DOWN, UNLOCK DOOR, DROP IRON KEY, W, GET GOLD, E, E, EXAMINE DESK, GET QUILL, GET PARCHMENT, W, CLIMB UP, W, S, E, S, E, E, E, N, E, WALK THROUGH WATER, W, N, CLIMB UP, SLIDE PARCHMENT UNDER DOOR.....

THE PROPHECY

By *Philip Reynolds* - AMSTRAD

During your travels you will be assailed by various baddies and nasties, once you have the sword just keep KILLING the attackers until they die. If you are quick your army will always triumph, if you are slow, you may or may not win the battle. If you are very slow, Ytrrias will invade your lands. GET SPADE, S, DIG, GET MALLET, E, S, S, DIG, LOOK, GET RING, N, N, E, E, DROP RING, DROP MALLET, E, S, S, GET SWORD, N, N, N, SHOW SWORD, S, E, E, E, S, E (if it is dark wait for daylight), DIG then DIG again, GET CROWN, BURY BONES, DROP SPADE, W, N, W, W, W, W, SHOW CROWN.....

FIDICEN

By Dorothy Mittard - COMMODORE 64

Start at the beautiful wooden gate to the small village: S, E to Stone House, SPEAK TO HERMIT (he says "The King can help you"), E, E, N, N, N to King's Private Quarters, GET SWORD, N to Throne Room, SPEAK TO KING (he says "The crystal is to the South"), N to garden, SPEAK TO GARDENER (he says "The crystal is hidden in a chest."), W, W, S to cupboard, GET LAMP, SPEAK TO CHEF (he says ignores you), KILL CHEF (you win and add to your score), N, N to Ancient Room (don't go west as there is no way out), E to dark room, LIGHT LAMP.....

CAVERNS OF DOOM

By Dorothy Mittard - COMMODORE 64

Start at the entrance of a mine complex: INVENTORY (you have a flashlight), N, N, NE, E, E, E to Prospectors shack (leave the broken lamp - its useless), GET oil DRUM, GET JAR, W, W, W, SW, W, GET ROPE, N, N to small room, GET MATCHES, EXAMINE WALL (you see a narrow crevice leading north), N, N, NW, N, W, W to large cavern, GET LAMP, E, E, DROP MATCHES, DROP JAR, SWIM, D to bottom of pool, N, N, NW, N, U, N to ledge, DROP oil DRUM, FILL LAMP (note you can't be carrying the oil drum when doing this), DROP ROPE, SWIM, D to bottom of pool, S, S, S, S, S, U, S to large cavern, GET MATCHES, LIGHT LAMP, UNLIGHT FLASHLIGHT, EMPTY JAR (of pickles - note don't eat the pickles as they are poison), GET JAR, PUT MATCHES (where?), JAR (this is so they don't get wet when you swim later), DROP JAR, DROP FLASHLIGHT, S, SE, S, S, S, E to crooked passage, EXAMINE SKELETON (you find a key), GET KEY, NE, E, E to pit room, CLIMB DOWN to bottom of pit, NW, GET GUN.....

CHRONOQUEST II

By The Wayfarer - AMIGA

ADVANCE to the beach, TAKE ANCHOR, SEARCH BEACH to find some coins, GET COINS, ADVANCE to the village, where all the inhabitants are just sitting about ignoring everything. PICK UP THE JAR, PICK UP THE TRUNK, RETREAT, RETREAT to the Explora. USE COINS ON REACTOR and you are transported to the deck of a ship, ADVANCE, EXAMINE LIONS TAIL to find a spear head at its tip, GET SPEARHEAD, EXAMINE RING on the right side of the boat, GET RING.....

COLONEL'S BEQUEST

By Paraskevas Tsourinakis

WALK EAST, TALK ETHEL, ASK ABOUT LILLIAN, RETURN TO YOUR ROOM, WALK WEST, LOOK LITTLE DOOR, OPEN LITTLE DOOR, LOOK IN CHUTE, CLOSE DOOR, LEAVE ROOM BY WEST DOOR, ENTER BATHROOM, TALK LILLIAN, LOOK LILLIAN, When she leaves, WASH HANDS. LEAVE then return. At the hall walk near left cabinet, LOOK CABINET, LOOK FLOOR, MOVE CABINET to find secret room. STEP ON PLATFORM, FACE NORTH, LOOK HOLES you see Fifi and Colonel. EXIT and ENTER COLONEL'S ROOM, TALK COLONEL, ENTER DOCTORS ROOM, LOOK BED, LOOK DOCTORS BAG, return to the hall and walk near right cabinet. LOOK CABINET, LOOK FLOOR, MOVE CABINET to find another secret room. STEP ON PLATFORM, FACE NORTH, LOOK HOLES. You see Lillian and Ethel. EXIT, WALK SOUTH, WALK DOWN THE STAIRS, WALK NORTH, Don't walk under the chandelier or you will die. WALK NEAR THE CLOCK, LOOK CLOCK, LOOK FLOOR, MOVE CLOCK - another secret passage. STEP ON PLATFORM, FACE NORTH, LOOK HOLES you see the Doctor, FACE SOUTH, LOOK HOLES.....

CONTRIBUTIONS NEEDED FOR THIS SECTION PLEASE - ESPECIALLY NEW GAMES

OBJECTS AND THEIR USES

THE THIEF By Graham Wheeler - ATARI ST

- SPADE
- NET
- BOTTLE
- FLOTSAM
- CHEST
- SHIELD
- COIN
- AXE
- HAMMER
- BEAN
- CARROT
- TUSK
- LADDER
- ROBES
- RING
- KNIFE
- CARD
- BOX
- GLOVES
- SCREWDRIVER
- KEY
- REED
- BONE
- BOOKS
- SCEPTRE
- SUNSTONE
- ELFSTONE
- BRACELET
- ORB
- PEARL
- EMERALD
- DIAMOND
- TOPAZ
- NUGGET
- OPAL
- SAPPHIRE
- RUBY
- AMYTHST

- From under bush - dig mound, dig sand, dig up carrot.
- From sea cave - wear to protect yourself from bees.
- Dig up on beach - use to get water from Lion and Sand for Scales, also to carry the Queen Bee.
- Found on beach past bear - examine to find chest.
- Found on beach past bear - use to store objects and treasure.
- From guard room - source of light.
- Found in chest - use to buy axe.
- Buy from gypsy - use to chop tangler roots.
- Found in cave - use to break urn and rock.
- Found in grass - eat to pass dog.
- Found in bumps - put in rabbit hole.
- Found by dog - use to open temple door.
- From cave by dog - use to climb down rampart.
- Found in secret room in temple - wear to move statue.
- Found in reeds by pool - turn to move statue.
- Found in robes - use to get key, amythst and reed.
- Given by poacher - use to enter secret room in treasury.
- Found in temple - contains elfstone.
- Found in armour - use to examine ashes.
- Found in ashes - use to open box.
- Found in cave - use to unlock drawer.
- Found in pool - use to breath under water.
- Found in cavern past plate - give to hyena.
- Found by murky pool - wear to cross swamp.
- Found in rabbit hole - take to treasury.
- Found under statue - take to treasury.
- Found in box - use in pool then take to treasury.
- Found in drawer - wear to be strong then take to treasury at the end.
- Found in hall of justice - take to treasury.
- Falls from necklace to reeds - put in depository.
- Found in rock - put in depository.
- In moles lair - put in depository.
- Found in moles tunnel - put in depository.
- Found on roof of cabin - put in depository.
- Found in urn - put in depository.
- Down in pool - put in depository.
- Found in cool cave - put in depository.
- Found first in tree then in secret room - put in depository.

JOKES OF THE MONTH By Steve Clay

Bill stood by the railway track,
The engine gave a squeal,
The driver took an oily rag,
And wiped Bill from the wheel.

SERIALIZED SOLUTIONS

THE GOLDEN PYRAMID

A Walk-through by **Jack Lockerby** - Spectrum.

PART ONE:

This adventure, by Laurence Creighton and available from Zenobi Software puts you in the role of a free-lance reporter. One day, sitting in your club, partaking of the odd gin and tonic, your reverie is broken by the club steward who hands you a letter. A quick glance at the postmark informs you that the missive was posted from the Middle East. You are instructed to proceed at once to the dark continent of Africa and once there to locate the Golden Pyramide and thence recover all the fabulous treasures. Some hours later you are in a light aircraft flying over the area. Unfortunately, the pilot cannot find a suitable landing site so he tells you to put on your parachute and jump. Always ready for an adventure you do just that and find yourself and your parachute tangled up in the branches at the top of a tree.

Neerby you notice a tropicel bird who seems to be protecting something. You look around the tree and spot a nest. There is an egg in the nest but the bally bird won't let you take it! With nothing else to so for the moment you decide to wait - suddenly the bird flies away leaving the egg unprotected. Gathering up the egg you remove the parachute harness and immediately descend to the ground where you nearly step onto a berbed hook. You pick it up and discover that you need a rope of some kind to make a grapping hook. Now where can we find a rope?

Going west to an area of bush country you soon find a small monkey who seems to be a cuddly little thing. So out of pity you pick it up and head back east again where you notice a trip-wire. You think about jumping over it but on second thoughts you decide to drop something to see what would happen. It looks like its got to be that cuddly monkey! As soon as you drop it, it derts off to the east, trips the wire and gets caught up in a net - rether him that you! Further east the path turns to the north where you notice something glistening in the foliage which on examination turns out to be a steel-jawed trap - being somewhat of a coward you decide to explore somewhere else before making any more to the north.

You return to the jungle clearing and travel south to the brink of a wide pit, you follow the road down to the bottom of the pit when you are confronted by the frightening figure of a large python making its way towards you. This calls for some quick thinking as the snake is quite capable of catching you if you try to escape. You have a quick check to see what you are carrying - of course the snake is hungry! So you roll the egg towards it - it changes direction and grabs the egg and swallows! Big mistake! The snakes eyes were too big for its belly as my old mum used to say - it chokes to daath. You decide to skin the snake with your knife intending to take it back with you as a souvenier. Idly twisting the skin between your fingures it begins to take on the shape of a rope. Tying the skin to the hook you make a rough and ready grapping hook.....

TO BE CONTINUED

GATEWAY TO THE SAVAGE FRONTIER - SSI [REVIEWED ON THE AMIGA
ALSO AVAILABLE ON PC & C64]

by Paul Righy

Gateway is Volume I in a new series set in TSR's AD&D "Forgotten Realms" world. The locale is the northern Sword Coast far to the west of the first series.

The game arrives on three disks with an Amiga supplement (and an addendum - see later). Adventurer's Journal and Rule Book. Only gamers with 1Meg Amigas need apply here. When you start you can get a quick look at the game via the built-in demo or you can load a pre-rolled party to have a wander around. Strangely, the reference card advises you to save your game every hour. Is this a reference to the Amiga itself or are SSI admitting that their game is a bit shaky?

The most damning part of the installation is the addendum which pours cold water over the hard drive installation instructions listed in the reference sheet. In fact, a hard drive cannot be used. SSI's reasons are pretty poor "Due to the size and the scope of this game, blah, blah." Oh, come on SSI! It looks like SSI can't reclaim the RAM that is taken by a hard drive. This is crazy as we're talking about a 1Meg-only game, here. It looks like SSI can't be bothered to solve the problem so they've taken the easy way out of disregarding hard drives totally.

As the game begins, your characters have been robbed of all but one small purse of gold while celebrating a successful job of guarding a caravan. They swear to find the thief and avenge themselves. After re-equipping as best they can, the party meets Krevish, who gets them a new commission. In the course of fulfilling this commission, they discover a threat to the Sword Coast from the Zhentarim. It is up to the party to foil this threat.

Initially the battles are challenging, but once your characters get above level 3, combat becomes easy until the final confrontation. However, the mazes are tough. You have to go back to Pool of Radiance to find mazes as tough as Gateway's, and the puzzles are equal to those in Secret of the Silver Blades (except there is no Well of Knowledge to give you the answers).

The ending is problematic. It is possible to kill the main villain, but the end-game sequence ignores the fact that the party killed him. The final battle is based on an original idea that makes it interesting and challenging. However, there is a very legitimate trick that permits an easy win. You can continue to play after end-game, but the overall situation doesn't change in any way. The side effects of the Zhentarim plot continue. This may be deliberate, as the overall plot of the series seems to be to foul a Zhentarim master plan. This quest makes only a small dent in the plan. Still, showing some effect of the defeat would have been more satisfying.

As with the previous gold box games, the user interface is a mixture of improvements and disappointments. The Fix command now also memorizes spells, but the automatic joining of items from Death Knights of Krynn and the scroll handles from Secret of the Silver Blades is not available. The automatic spell memorizing does not allow you to memorize additional spells your characters get when they advance a level. A separate Memorize is still needed for that.

The artwork is the best yet in the gold box series. The giants, trolls, and ogres are not only more realistically sized, but are much more menacing looking. There is one exception: The lizardmen look like pot-bellied kiunge lizards rather than horrible monsters.

Copy protection is manual look-up which (finally!) is presented in the right order (page number, then line number, with word number last). One major improvement in the copy protection is that the password is needed only the first time you start, instead of the previous random calls.

Gateway to the Savage Frontier is a decent RPG with a priven, if rather staid, design. However, a number of design imperfections prevent it from being as good as it should have been.

CONQUESTS OF CAMELOT

A guide by *Ron Rainbird* played on Amiga 1 meg

PART ONE:

From the centre of Camelot Floor Plen, go west to Arthur's (King's) Room. There, get dressed, not forgetting your armour and Sword. Get Purse. Leave and go to the Queens Bower, north of King's Room. Greet her (kiss her if you like, but get too ardent and she will give you some good advice). Ask about Lancelot, then go to the Rose Bush and pick the Rose. This is important. Ask about the Rose. Say goodbye and go East to Merlin's Room.

Study the Map of England and ask Merlin bout the map. Study and examine EVERYTHING. Go to the Chest and open it. Get the Lodestone which lies therein. Ask Merlin about each Knight individually; also the Holy Grail. Leave and go South to the Treasury.

Give your Purse to the Treasurer and ask him to fill it with Gold, then Silver and finally Copper. Don't leave without teking the now-filled purse. Ask Treasurer about Lancelot and Galahad. Leave and go North, West then South to the Chepel of the Two Gods.

Examine Altars end go to Christ's Altar first. Kneel and give first a Silver coin and then a Gold Coin. Wait for response and then rise and go to the Altar of Mithras, where you must go through the same procedure as for the Altar of Christ. After receiving information and a blessing, leave the Chapel and go South to the Courtyerd.

Mount Horse and ride towrds the nearest Guerd. Ask him eabout Galahad then give him a copper coin if you wish, but do not be too generous! Ride out - a Mule will automatically follow you. There should be no difficulty leaving Camelot provided you received the blessing in the chapel. Follow the road until e Map is displayed.

Choose Ot Moor es your destinetion. Go East to the North edge of a frozen lake. Dismount and walk to the Lake's edge, then recite the Message of the Rose, "Love is my Shield". Rose petals will start to fall ahead of you, showing you a safe path across the thin ice. Stay within the petals es you progresse and you will eventually arrive at the Ice Pelece. Be warned! Stray outside and you will die in icy water.

In the Ice Palace, speek to the Ice Maiden who will give you a task, then magickelly transport you back to firm ground and your Horse. Travel back to Ot Moor and the Map of England.

This time choose the Forest Perilous - and now your troubles really begin! Give a copper coin to the Widdershins Shrine then go West until you meet a Hunter. Offer to buy his spear for a Gold Coin.

Travel West (with the Spear in hand) until you meet three Boers. These you will have to kill with the spear, one at a time before you can proceed further. Save the game just prior to this battle. Wait until the Boar is nearly upon you before striking with you spear. Practice will soon make you edept at Boer-sticking. When you have defeated the Boars, head North-West.

TO BE CONTINUED

STRATEGY SECTION

HARPOON - 360/Electronic Arts [reviewed on the Amiga : also available on PC]
by Paul Righy

Detail, intricacy, realism: Each is a hallmark of Harpoon. A game evolved from the highly successful miniature boardgame, Harpoon is the most current and accurate simulation in its field. It is, in fact, a wargame enthusiast's dream.

Harpoon is a naval simulation at the commander level, depicting the final confrontation between the USSR and NATO forces. As Commander of NATO's North Atlantic Task Force (or perhaps as the Soviet Northern Fleet's counterpart), you have at your disposal a massive database of more than 100 Soviet and NATO weapon systems: aircraft, surface ships, as well as submarines.

The Amiga version of Three Sixty-Pacific's Harpoon program is apparently based on version 1.1 of Harpoon for the IBM-PC. The graphics are adequate, keeping in mind that this is not a graphics-oriented product. The artwork is of good quality, legible, and provides the required information, but no one should hope to find the lush art of, say, a Cinemaware product. The sound, on the other hand, is everything Amiga users have come to expect from their software. I'll warn you now: Expect to be startled the first time you hear the alarm klaxon sound!

Harpoon requires a minimum of 1Mb of RAM and can be installed on your hard drive. The game is not copy-protected in any way (sounds of champagne corks popping). The box contains the 120-page Harpoon Operations Manual; a tactical guide written by Tom Clancy (yes, that one), a short insert by Tom Clancy summarizing his visits on board two Soviet Naval vessels; and an Amiga installation and version notes card.

You'll find the strengths and weaknesses of the different weapon systems an important facet of Harpoon. Naval simulation no longer consists of Nelson and old broadsides. Victory depends not as much on who fires first, but on who spots whom first, and who efficiently husbands able resources to launch an offensive force while dealing with the missile group that's heading closer at 1500 knts per hour (and who has the largest stock of clean laundry). With the limitations imposed by weather conditions at sea, inaccurate intelligence, and the constant threat of the preying submarines, you'll waste no time chewing on your nails and scanning the map (or scanning your nails and chewing on the map), wondering where the enemy fleet might be on this desolate expanse of water.

Harpoon includes GIUK, the first in a series of BattleSets. This BattleSet consists of 12 Scenarios that take place within the boundaries of Greenland, Iceland, and the United Kingdom Gap. It's interesting to note is that each consecutive scenario is more difficult than the previous one, although there's a lot you need to appreciate regarding Harpoon's idea of "difficulty." You may command an entire Carrier Task Force in one scenario, and a minuscule group of missile boats in another; in either case, the scenario's difficulty is by no means a gauge of your fleet's quality. Rather, difficulty depends on how hard it becomes for the Task Force Commander to keep the fleet straightened out - a factor affected by the fleet's size, which increases in proportion to the difficulty level of the scenario. Harpoon is described as a commander-level naval simulation, and rightly so. The game effectively balances the player's role as Commander with some simple limitations that many strategic simulations often forget. Commanders direct their troops, and the troops direct the nuts and bolts: Air defense is handled automatically, among other things. This leaves you with a Commander's sense of controlling not just a fleet of ships, but a fleet of people as well.

Harpoon is nothing less than an excellent. It deserves the title of the most complete, the most accomplished, the most professional and, above all, the most enjoyable Amiga wargame there has ever been. Buy it - and then buy the extra Battlesets that go with it.

Panzer Battles is the latest in SSG's *Battlefront* series that depicts World War II battles from a command perspective. It is a further refinement in this system and includes scenarios covering six Eastern Front battles. As with all the *Battlefront* games, *Panzer Battles* includes two scenario-building tools, *WarPlan* and *WarPaint*. These tools allow you to modify the existing scenarios or to create new ones.

The game arrives on two disks plus two manuals. *Panzer Battles* has no copy protection but does need 1 Meg of RAM to run. You can also install it on hard disk if you like. Another handy utility is the screen dump to the printer. So that you can study your tactics at position or discuss it with friends over a swift half.

Play consists of issuing orders to a standard set of units (usually a regiment of four battalions). These units can be directed to advance on an objective, go into reserve, attack, or defend. Depending on the tactical situation, you will also determine the type of attack or defense. Attack types range from all-out assaults to careful probes. Defenses range from stand and hold to delaying actions.

Once orders are issued, the computer displays and resolves all combat to the sound of simple explosions. Then, any attrition is applied to affected units. This may cause some units to rout or be destroyed. In addition, units will become increasingly fatigued as they are involved in combat, which will impact on their effectiveness in later turns.

As should be clear from the above description, *Panzer Battles* (and the *Battlefront* series of games) is very different from most available wargames. Absent is the player's ability to control everything. Instead, you must struggle with your command and the ups and downs of war. Units can and will wander from an advance in order to engage enemy units. Command-level formations may be split and thereby weakened. Nonetheless, as you grow familiar with the system and learn how to work within it, you should find that you have rather more control over the course of the battle than it may first appear.

The six scenarios in *Panzer Battles* cover a lot of ground, presenting a panorama of the ebb and flow of power on the Eastern Front. In scenarios from the early years of the war (Minsk, Moscow, and Kharkov), the Germans are clearly superior, if not invincible. But by 1943, the Soviets are able to slug it out on a more or less equal basis with the Axis forces, as indicated in the Prokhorovka, Kanev, and Korsun scenarios. The scenarios also depict a variety of situations, from frontal confrontations (Prokhorovka, Moscow) to sweeping armour engagements that range across the map (Minsk, Kharkov, Kanev, Korsun).

If you are not satisfied with the scenarios included, or wish to simulate a battle that is not represented, you may use the scenario toolkits provided with *Panzer Battles*. *WarPlan* lets you define the units involved and the basic map, and allows you to modify an existing scenario or create an entirely new one. To paint the units or map, *WarPaint* is provided.

I do have some nits to pick with *Panzer Battles*. SSG has converted their packaging to a more elaborate (and accepted) box and sleeve format. Unfortunately, they have dispensed with the miniature maps included in earlier games. In addition, the historical notes are slightly smaller, and they describe only the battles represented in each scenario. Finally, there are fewer scenarios in *Panzer Battles* than in *Rommel* (six vs. eight). The scenarios tend to be a bit shorter on the average.

On the positive side, the situations in *Panzer Battles* are interesting and generally present different problems than those found in earlier *Battlefront* games. Many of the scenarios are more fluid than the slugfests dominating most of *Rommel*'s scenarios. Unit density is lower on the whole, and you must figure out how to cover vast areas with seemingly inadequate forces.

Players interested in WWII or the Eastern Front should definitely grab this game. Those who have enjoyed SSG's earlier efforts will find *Panzer Battles* equally rewarding. Bottom line: Recommended.



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